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THE METHOD OF Salvation.

In Two Parts.

I. A Sinner's Converſion to Saving Faith in God through Chriſt.

II. The Progreſs of a Believer from his Converſion to his Perfection, under the Work of Sanctification.

By *JOHN WARREN*, M. A.
Sometime Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Hatfield Broad-Oak* in *Eſſex*.

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THE Method of Salvation.

THE Way and Method of God's working upon Men to ſave them eternally, is to be attended according to the dependance which one part of that Bleſſed Undertaking has upon another, as the Holy Scripture ſets it forth; and that partly in the Account which it gives of the nature of the ſeveral impreſſions made upon the Soul in order to its Ultimate Happineſs; and partly in the Examples of Perſons whoſe Converſon to God, and Progreſs towards Heaven is therein reported. And though it pleaſes God to glorify his manifold Wiſdom as to Circumſtances, Time, and Meaſures, in this, as in all his Works, yet uſually he obſerves the ſame Order in his Saving Operations on the Souls of men; as *Mar.* 4. 28, 29. And hereunto the ordinary Experiences of the People of God bear witneſs.

In handling this Method, we may obſerve,

1. The Degrees or Steps by which a Soul is brought into the eſtate of Salvation, *i. e.* till he believes in Jeſus Chriſt.

2. The Moments of his Progreſs in Grace till he comes to Glory.

1. Of the former.

The Firſt Step or Degree, is,

A ſerious and ſolemn Conſideration which the Sinner takes of his own Eſtate in reference to God. When it pleaſes God in his great mercy to take hold on a Sinner that he may bring him home to himſelf, he makes choice of ſome fit time and means to preſs him upon a ſad and ſerious thoughtfulneſs of his Eternal Condition, and the preſent ſtate of his Soul in reference to it. *Ezek.* 18. 14, 28. *He conſiders, and turns*—— This is the firſt good tidings we hear of a Sinner, He *conſiders.* Sinners of themſelves are wild and careleſs Creatures, forgetting God and their own Souls; *Pſal.* 50. 22. *Now conſider this ye that forget God,* &c. And ſo God complains of the *Iſraelites,* Iſa. 1. 4. *My people doth not conſider.* They are raſh and heady in their ways, not thinking ſoberly what they do, nor what is like to be the end of it, *Jer.* 8. 6. But when God undertakes the ſaving of a Soul, he takes him aſide, and makes him lay his hand as it were upon his heart, and bethink himſelf where-about he is, which way he is a-going, and what is like to be his latter end.

Here obſerve, 1. How the Sinner is brought to this Conſideration: And 2. How he proceeds in it.

1. That which puts the Soul upon this Conſideration, is firſt and principally the Word of God, the grand Inſtrument and Engine in the whole work of Salvation, whereby he calls all men

men every-where, and commands them to repent. Thus ſaith the Lord, *Conſider your ways.* And by thus ſaying, he makes men conſider them. It is the Word, that awakens the ſleepy Souls of ſecure Sinners, and makes them look about them. It is the Word, that makes them remember God and themſelves, and enquire how the Caſe ſtands between him and them; and without its admonition they never go about this Work to any purpoſe. The Nations that have not the Word made known to them, forget God, and forgetting him, can never take any effectual cognizance of their own Eſtate in reference to him.

2. Secondarily, and under the Word, there are divers things that God uſes as means to induce men to this Conſideration of their Spiritual Eſtate, according to his own good pleaſure. Sometimes a ſharp Affliction makes the Patient conſider, how he has offended God, and how unable he is to bear his diſpleaſure, but in thoſe touches of his Hand which he now feels; and conſequently how miſerable he muſt needs be, if all his Wrath ſhould break out upon him. Thus God ſeals Inſtruction to the Sinner by his afflictive Providence, *Job* 33. 16. and makes him when bound in thoſe Cords, to ſtudy and ponder thoſe things, which while he was well, he little regarded.—— Sometimes the Sinner is put upon this Conſideration by obſerving the Complaints which others make, and the Fears which they expreſs about the Eſtate of their Souls. For, thinks he, if theſe men be in ſuch danger, it's good for me to look about me; —— Sometimes, yea very often, the Care and Diligence of Godly men to work out their Salvation, induces Sinners that obſerve it, to remember themſelves, and take their own Eſtate into con-

ſideration. If ſo much care and pains be neceſſary to the ſaving of a Soul, then ſure it concerns me to be careful for my ſelf. I have a Soul to ſave as well as others; and if the ſaving of a Soul requires ſo much attendance, it will be ill for me to neglect it, ſays the hitherto-ſecure and inconſiderate Sinner: Thus Parents, Maſters, Neighbours, by following cloſely the Work of their own Salvation, may do much towards the Converſion of their Children, Servants, and Neighbours. And there are ſome Remarkable Inſtances of this kind that might be here inſerted, but for the ſtudy of brevity.

2. Now for the manner and order of the Soul's proceeding in this *Conſideration*, it admits of much variety. But according to the Condition of the Subject-matter, and the End whereto ſuch Conſideration ſerves, it may be briefly thus ſtated:

1. The Soul conſiders what the Law of God requires of Man, and how he has tranſgreſt and broken it; what exact Holineſs and Purity God demands of him, and how far he has fallen ſhort of it in thought, word, and deed. *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn.* In order to a true Converſion, the Sinner muſt examine his ways, and conſider where, and how they have been faulty; which he can never do, but by comparing them with that Rule which God has given men to walk by: He muſt enquire by the direction of the Law what he has not done that he ſhould have done; and what he has done contrary to it: There is no returning to God till a man be duly informed of his departing from him, nor any clear underſtanding of that, but

but by a ſerious and ſevere comparing of his Life with the Law. For by the Law is the knowledge of Sin. Thus men come to know themſelves to be Offenders, and to have diſpleaſed and provoked God. But here uſually the Sinner's thoughts are very much confined to ſome one ſin or other, in which he apprehends himſelf eſpecially to have offended: As the *Jews* in *Acts* 2. had their Eye eſpecially upon that ſin of their Crucifying the Lord of Life, as indeed well they might, it being beyond expreſſion heinous. And the Jailor, *Acts* 16. was doubtleſs eſpecially mindful of his Cruelty to the Apoſtles the evening before his Converſion. — Yea, 'tis obſerved yet farther, that many times the Sin that moſtly takes up the thoughts of ſuch a Soul at firſt, is ſome ſin that has leſs of malignity againſt God in it, than many other which the Party has been guilty of, as Lying, Sabbath-breaking, Diſobedience to Parents, or ſome external act of Sin in which he has been more carried by his ſenſual inclination, than maliciouſly wicked.

2. He conſiders the ſevere Judgment of God denounced againſt Sinners, and his own concernment in it. The Word ſays, *The ſoul that ſins ſhall dye*, and makes Eternal death the wages of every ſin, *Rom.* 6. Yea, the Word declares all men by Nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and children of wrath; and hereupon the Sinner reaſons thus with himſelf, Is there not a reality in theſe Threatning words? And do they not take effect upon Sinners according to the plain ſenſe and import of them? What may I think then of my ſelf? Am I liable to all this danger, or have I any fence againſt it? If I ſhould now dye, as I know not how ſoon I may, what were like to come of

me? If I be under the force of theſe Threatnings, wo unto me! And what have I to plead againſt them? If I was by Nature a Child of wrath, how got I out of that condition, or am I yet in the gall of bitterneſs and bands of iniquity? Thus the Soul ſtudies and examines his own eſtate. And this is the Firſt ſtep towards Converſion; *Conſideration.*

The Second ſtep or degree of this work is, a ſtrong Conviction of a miſerable and periſhing Eſtate. But before we come directly to conſider that work, we muſt take notice of ſome hindrances or diverſions, by reaſon of which many men are taken off, even at the firſt ſtep, and never come to a ſound Conviction at all, and others are long e're they come at it.

1. Some grow weary of the unpleaſant work of *Self-Conſideration*, and let it fall before ever they have brought it to any Convincing iſſue. This is very ordinary with Perſons a little ſhaken under a Sermon, or griped by Conſcience under an Affliction, or ſcared with the thoughts of Death, to ask the Queſtion, What eſtate they are in? But the Subject being very ungrateful to Nature, they never ſtay their Studies upon it, to bring it to any determinate concluſion: As *Pilate* asked, *What is truth?* But would not ſtay to hear the Anſwer. They tranſlate their thoughts to other matters, as being loath to endure the pains of a thorough Examination of themſelves.

2. From the Conſideration of themſelves, ſome turn aſide to the ſurvey of others whom they think to be as great, or greater Sinners, and ſo content themſelves in hope to ſpeed as well as they.

they. They obſerve many as bad as they, or worſe, who yet are confident of a ſafe eſtate; yea, they are knowing Perſons, and likely to underſtand their own condition as well as any; they are Learned men, it may be, Miniſters, that of all others ſhould ſee if there be any danger in their way; and beſides they are well thought of generally by their Neighbours, and few or none ſeem to queſtion their eſtate: Why then (ſays the a-little-ſtartled Sinner) ſhould I further diſquiet my ſelf with ſad and doubtful apprehenſions of my condition? I ſee no probability but I may ſpeed as well as thouſands that are round about me; I'll even take up and run the common hazard of my Neighbours, and of Mankind in general. Thus Conſideration is many times obſtructed and falls ſhort of a ſound Conviction.

But where God goes on with the deſign of Saving a Soul, he holds the Mind cloſe, and keeps it from the vain ſtudy of other things and Perſons, till he has made the Sinner plainly ſee himſelf Wretched, Miſerable, and Periſhing; and that is the ſecond degree of this work, which comes now to be conſidered.

This *Conviction* is the proper effect of a well proſecuted Self-conſideration, and the concluſion naturally iſſuing from theſe two premiſes well attended; 1. The demands of the Law from every man. 2. The Judgment of God againſt every Offender (of which before). He that well conſiders theſe, and duly applies to himſelf as his own concernment, muſt needs underſtand himſelf to be in a periſhing eſtate, without the uſe of ſome proper and ſufficient Remedy. Thus the Prodigal was kept pondering his condition till

he perceived himſelf periſhing for hunger, *Luke* 15. 17. *When he came to himſelf*, —— he had been ranging abroad from himſelf as well as from his Father's houſe, and unmindful of his greateſt concernments; where he was, which way he was going, and what was like to come of him, was none of his ſtudy all this while: But now at length he returned home to himſelf, and took his own eſtate into a ſober conſideration; upon which he found plainly that he was like to dye for want of Bread, *I periſh for hunger*. —— So the *Jews*, *Acts* 2. were held under the ſad thoughts of what they had done and deſerved, till they were *pierced at the heart*; that is, they found themſelves dead men, as a man that is ſtabb'd to the heart, for whom there is, as we uſe to ſay, but one way. —— This account alſo the Apoſtle gives of himſelf, *Rom.* 7. 4. *That when the commandment came, ſin revived, and he died*; he perceived that vigor and Soul-deſtroying power of ſin in himſelf, which he was not aware of before, and plainly ſaw himſelf a dying man, Spiritually undone and periſhing. —— The like work we alſo ſee in the Jailor, *Acts* 16. *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* That word (to be Saved) plainly implies a ſenſe and deep Conviction of a loſt eſtate, that he was at preſent an undone man. Thus the poor Sinner hangs, as it were, over the mouth of Hell in his own apprehenſion, and ſees nothing more likely than that he ſhould preſently fall into it; he plainly hears the Law threatning him with Death Eternal, ſees God frowning upon him, and deſtruction ready to ſwallow him up; he that a few days ago thought himſelf as ſafe and as much in favour with God as any in the world, and it may be, was ſecure of Soul-concernments,

never

never troubled himſelf with thoughts of Eternity, and took it for a point of folly, and a beginning of madneſs in other men, to diſturb their minds with fear of Hell and Condemnation, is now become a miſerable and periſhing man in his own Judgment, and of all men alive the moſt likely to be Damned Eternally.

The Third ſtep or degree of this work is, a Soul-Afflicting *Humiliation*, a work made up of terror and ſorrow under the apprehenſion of the wrath of God, and the ſenſe of a periſhing eſtate. A deep ſorrow and anguiſh of Spirit, ſeizing upon the Sinner under the Conviction before ſpoken of. This work is commonly called Legal Repentance, becauſe it is a deep ſorrow and trouble about ſin, depending upon that ſenſe which a man has of his condemnation under the Law: But though it be not that ſorrow which is called Godly ſorrow, yet no man attains the true Spirit of Godlineſs, till firſt he has had a taſte of this ſorrow.

This is ſo natural and neceſſary a product of *Conviction*, that no man can totally eſcape it, that has once known what 'tis to be convinced of Sin and Miſery.—— And yet there is one way that Perſons ſtrongly convinced of the evil and danger of their eſtate have to divert themſelves from that preſſing trouble and anguiſh which is uſually the effect of a ſound Conviction, and that is, an hope of being brought over into a better eſtate hereafter, though they are now in ſuch a condition as wherein to dye, were certainly to go to Hell, yet they hope they ſhall have the Grace at one time or other e're they dye, to return to God, and make their Peace with him. —— The

Exam-

Example of *Fælix* is very appoſite, who being convinced of his bad eſtate ſo far, as that he fell a trembling under *Paul*'s Doctrine, yet ſhifted off his trouble by adjourning his cares to another time, and ſtopped the mouth of his Conſcience by promiſing the Apoſtle a further Audience, *Acts* 24. 25. Some Perſons are ſo much convinced that they are in an evil and periſhing eſtate, that they will not ſtick to ſay, They think verily if they ſhould dye as they are, they ſhould be damned, and periſh without remedy: And yet they are very little troubled at the matter, becauſe they hope they ſhall turn to God, and get Peace with him yet in time to come.

But where God undertakes the great work of Salvation, Conviction is always attended with a deep Humiliation, and Contrition of Spirit; as the *Jews* in *Acts* 2. were pierced to the very heart, wounded, though not to death, yet to extremity of pain; *a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* And the Terrors of God fell ſo vehemently upon the Jailor, *Acts* 16. that he could not forbear trembling (though a man of a Spirit ſturdy and rugged enough) till he had received ſome information about the way and means of obtaining Life eternal. *I periſh for hunger*, ſaid the poor Prodigal; O ſad and doleful ſpeech! the language of an aking heart you may be ſure. Yea, *Judas* himſelf proceeded thus far towards Converſion, when he was Convicted, he repented with a Legal Repentance, as 'tis commonly diſtinguiſhed; a Repentance wherein the Soul is troubled and tormented about Sin, under apprehenſion of the wrath of God.

This Humiliation and Anguiſh of Spirit doth proceed eſpecially upon:

1. The

1. The apparent danger of the Wrath to come: The Poor Sinner looks upon himſelf as already Sentenced for Hell, and it torments him beforehand, to think how ſoon he may be thruſt into it, ſo that he is always crying, *Woe, woe*, to himſelf, in thoughts of dying in that eſtate.

2. The Remembrance of the ſins whereby he has brought himſelf into that eſtate: It's a torment to him to conſider, that for ſo vile and baſe a thing as Sin is, he ſhould make himſelf ſo miſerable; as the *Jews* in *Lam.* 5.16. *Woe unto us that we have ſinned.* And the more pleaſing any ſin has been to him, the greater pain it is to him to reflect upon it; he is out of all patience with himſelf, to think how fooliſh, how bruitiſh, and how like a beaſt he has been before God, even in thoſe things he thought a little while ago he did gallantly, and wondred at thoſe that run not with him into the ſame exceſs.

3. Conſcience of his refuſing Counſel, and neglecting Opportunity to take a better courſe; now he remembers what warnings he has had, and how he has often been called upon and earneſtly entreated by God and man to fly from the wrath to come, and avoid the miſery into which he ſees himſelf now falling, and ſtill refuſed to be perſwaded, and was as the deaf Adder that ſtops her ears againſt the voice of the Charmer, *&c.* The calling over of theſe things makes the poor Sinner a burthen and a terror to himſelf. See how *Solomon* repreſents it in *Prov.* 5. 11, 12, 13, 14.

This then is the Third ſtep of this great work, a Soul-Afflicting Humiliation. This is the ſtate of

of men weary and heavy laden, as *Mat.* 11. This is that Spirit of bondage of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks *Rom.* 8. That Spiritual ſickneſs which makes men feel their need of a Phyſician; that wound at the heart, which puts men upon enquiry *What they ſhall do to be ſaved:* Which is next to be attended.

The Fourth Step or Degree of this work is, a ſtudious *Conſultation*, about a Recovery. When a man is thorowly convinced of his miſery, and affected with ſorrow for it, it is proper for him to enquire what courſe he may take, to get out of the evil eſtate which he is in, and eſcape the miſery which he expects.

But yet ſome Convicted Perſons, and Perſons deeply affected with a Legal Humiliation, fall ſhort of this Step towards Converſion, and never come to any ſerious Enquiry after the way and means of Salvation. Such are they, who ſeeing themſelves undone, and apprehending the wrath of God ready to come forth againſt them, immediately fall into a deſpairing ſorrow, and conclude peremptorily againſt themſelves, that there is no help for them —Thus *Cain*, when he heard his judgment, fell preſently into a ſad and ſorrowful conſideration of the evil that was now invading him, till he had made it, in his own opinion impoſſible for his wound to be healed, his iniquity to be forgiven; never enquiring in the leaſt how he might get out of the unhappy eſtate into which he was fallen, but ſinking in his Sorrows without any further queſtion.

But where God proceeds in a deſign of ſaving a poor Soul, when once he has brought him to an humbling Conviction of his ſin and miſery, he puts

puts him upon a ſerious enquiry after the way and means of his recovery: So the *Jews*, Acts 2. *Men and Brethren what ſhall we do?* and the Jailor, *Acts* 16. Being deeply ſenſible of the evil of their preſent eſtate, they ſearch diligently for ſome way and means to get out of it; as the Unjuſt Steward, when he ſaw that he ſhould be turned out of his Office, fell preſently a conſidering what courſe was to be taken, that he might not periſh as he was now like to do, for want of houſe and harbour, *Luke* 16. 3. *What ſhall I do?* This Conſultation is managed with ſome variety; Sometimes the affrighted Soul confines his terror to himſelf, and takes counſel with his own heart, as *Pſal.* 13. 2. which is never like to come to any good concluſion; ſometimes he ſets to reading Scripture, and other good Books. And though this be indeed the way to get information, yet many there are, who in this diſtreſs, for want of skill to underſtand what they read, perplex themſelves more, inſtead of finding out the proper cure for their diſeaſe. But, generally, where the work goes on to good effect, it pleaſes God to direct ſuch Souls to ſome able Miniſters, or experienced Chriſtians, to whom, though ſhame and fear may for a time reſtrain them, they at length open their griefs, and ſtate the caſe of their Souls, earneſtly purſuing the great Queſtion, *What ſhall we do?*

The Fifth Step or Degree of this Work is, An heedful and humble *Attendance* on the Doctrine of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt contained in the Goſpel; as 'tis ſaid of *Lydia*, ſhe attended to the things that were ſpoken by *Paul*. And what was the Sum of his Doctrine every where, we know,

viz.

viz. That which alone gives a ſatisfying Anſwer to the Queſtion, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?*

This is the next Step toward Converſion and Salvation, after Conſultation had about the way to eſcape the wrath of God. But as there are many conſidering Souls that never come to any full Conviction, and ſome convinced, who yet are never ſoundly humbled; yea, many proceed as far as a Legal Repentance and Humiliation, and yet never come to any ſerious Enquiry: So there are many that conſult with themſelves, and may be with others, for and about a Remedy for their bad Eſtate, and yet never attain ſo far as to give any heedful Attention to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as that which propounds the only way of life for dying Souls.

1. Some pitch upon falſe Remedies, and heal the Wound ſlightly, as the Prophet ſpeaks, being deceived by their own hearts, or miſled by erroneous and unskilful Teachers. And the Rock that men here uſually ſplit upon, is an opinion that they may ſatisfy God, and ſave themſelves by their own works, by amending their Lives, breaking off from former Sins, and taking up neglected Duties, emancipating themſelves to the Law, as the Prodigal hired himſelf to the Citizen, in hope to recover favour with God, and eſcape his Judgment, by reformation of their Lives. Now they fall to praying, hearing of Sermons, reading of Scripture, and other good Books; they forſake their bad company, and leave off their licentious courſes, and ſo pacify their Conſciences, choke their Convictions, and drain up their Sorrows, till at length all their trouble being ſuppreſſed, they grow ſecure again, and by degrees

degrees return to their old courſe; or elſe (which makes their caſe leſs hopeful) having accuſtomed themſelves to a form of godlineſs, take up with that, and run the ſtage of Hypocrites.—It is indeed their Duty to reform their Lives, and high time, When they ſee themſelves periſhing for Sin: But to reſt in that Reformation as the price of their Acceptance with God, is that wherein they ſeduce themſelves to their own ruin, if God do not graciouſly ſeize upon them, and give them another ſhaking, to bring them back into the way.

2. Others, after ſome Conſultation had with themſelves, and ſometimes with others alſo, fall into incurable Deſpair. They can deviſe no Remedy for themſelves, and therefore they verily think there is none; or they have good counſel offered them by thoſe they adviſe with, but underſtand it not aright; or they ask advice of thoſe that are unable to direct them, or careleſs of their ſad condition; which was the caſe of *Judas*, he conſidered his eſtate, was convinced of his ſin, and the deſerved puniſhment of it; he was deeply humbled, and proceeded to conſultation. But this was his unhappineſs, he opened his caſe to thoſe that had no compaſſion for him, no, not when he profeſſed himſelf tormented in Conſcience with the pains of that ſin into which they had hired him, *Mat.* 27. 4. *What is that to us? ſee thou to that.* Poor *Judas!* He had betrayed his Lord, and could not go to him for comfort; he had forſaken the Diſciples, and could not look them in the face: To whom ſhould he betake himſelf for advice in ſo great a diſtreſs, when he ſaw the wrath of God ſmoking againſt him, and ready to conſume him, but to the *Prieſts*, whoſe office

it

it was to inſtruct the People, to *have compaſſion on the ignorant, and thoſe that are out of the way*, Hebr. 5. 1, 2. and who were ſo greatly concerned in his ſin? but they rejected him, and left him periſhing in his deſpair. Unhappy Souls, who under the Terrors of the Almighty fall into the Hands of ſuch hard-hearted Confeſſors!

But where the work of Salvation goes on, the Enquiry ſpoken of before, never ceaſes till the Soul ſets it ſelf down under the teaching of the Goſpel, as God ſome way or other provides it for him, and hearkens diligently to the propoſals therein made to Sinners for Salvation; ſee *Acts* 11. 14. with *Acts* 10. 33. Now he hears the Goſpel after another manner, and reads it with another attention than heretofore; watches and obſerves every word that falls from the mouth of God, as *Benhadad*'s Servants watched the words of the King of *Iſrael*; that if any argument of hope were offered, they might be ſure to lay hold on it. O how ſtill were the *Jews*, and how cloſely attentive to *Peter*'s diſcourſe! *Acts* 2. while he was preaching the Goſpel to them, after they had propounded to him that weighty queſtion, *What ſhall we do?* Now the Sinner will not miſs a Sermon that he may hear, nor loſe a Sentence for want of heed taking, that he may ſee if there be any hope for ſuch a one as he is: *Every one* (ſays our Saviour) *that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me*, John 6. 45. Now is the Soul of whom we are ſpeaking, hearing the Father, what offers he makes of his Son to poor Sinners, and what encouragement he gives them. to come to him and truſt in him. And if he do but underſtand and learn what he hears, it will be well with him.

The

The *Sixth* ſtep or degree of this work is, *Belief of the Goſpel*, an hearty Aſſent to the word of Salvation. Attention to the Goſpel ſerves properly to bring the Soul to a belief of it, there being ſuch evidence of a Divine Authority and Majeſty in it, as ſtrongly demands the credit of him that ſeriouſly attends it. But even in this place alſo, there is danger of obſtruction or diverſion to be heedfully obſerved: Men that do attentively conſider the Goſpel, are yet in danger to be turned aſide. Firſt,

By *Disbelief*. The Goſpel is ſo great a Myſtery, and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt ſo ſtrange, and ſo unlikely a thing to the judgment of Fleſh and Blood, that the poor affrighted Sinner cannot bring himſelf to believe, that there is any ſuch way and means of Life as the Word propounds, tho it may be he never doubted of it before; while as yet he never underſtood the evil of his own eſtate, nor what an hateful thing a Sinner is. That which he never queſtioned before, he now looks upon as hard to be believed: That Jeſus Chriſt is ready and willing to ſave Sinners, eſpecially ſo great a Sinner as he accounts himſelf to be; and this incredulity will be his deſtruction, if help come not in from Heaven againſt it.

2. By *Misbelief*. A man may attentively hear or read the Goſpel, and yet be far from underſtanding it; As the *Eunuch* ſaid, *How can I underſtand, except I have ſome one to guide me?* Some take Redemption to be more extenſive than it is, and think it enough to entitle them to Salvation, that they are Sinners, becauſe Chriſt died to ſave Sinners. Thus many make no more doubt of calling Chriſt *their* Saviour, than of calling him

the Saviour. —— Others again miſtake the other way, and think ſome Sinners to be excluded from Salvation (eſpecially ſuch as they take themſelves to be) though they come never ſo heartily to Jeſus Chriſt to ſeek it. And indeed there are many ſuch Souls, as have been hitherto deſcribed, that fall into this Error, and by it into deſpair; miſtaking ſuch places as that in *Luke* 13.24. *Many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*—— That in *Matth.* 12. *Whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall never be forgiven.* And ſo that in *Heb.* 6. — *&c.* As if theſe and ſuch like Scriptures were Exceptions to the offer and promiſe of Salvation. So all the former work of Conviction, Terror, Conſultation, *&c.* is loſt by reaſon of ſuch like miſapprehenſions. How ſadly *Judas* miſcarried in the point of conſultation, was ſhewed before. And probably that took him very much off from ſtudying what he knew of the Goſpel. But yet 'tis very likely he might ſtumble alſo at this Stone, though he was not ignorant of the Doctrine of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt; yea, had often preached it to others; yet he might think himſelf excluded from the Grace of the Goſpel, though it be never ſo freely offered to Sinners in general, becauſe Chriſt had ſo often denounced irreverſible Judgment againſt the man that ſhould betray him; though in truth that was no bar to his Salvation, if he had ſought it in the way of the Goſpel. For *this is the condemnation of them that periſh, that they will not come to Chriſt that they may have life:* And that was his Condemnation. For though many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and not be able, yet that is at the Day of Judgment, as appears by the next words to theſe, *Luke* 13. 25. And as a man that has ſinned

ned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, might have pardon, but that the nature of that Sin is ſuch as binds the Sinner up in impenitency and unbelief; ſo that Sin of *Judas* was ſuch as hardned his heart againſt any ſerious Addreſs to Chriſt for pardon. And ſo our Saviour doomed him to deſtruction, not as one excepted from the Promiſe, but as one concluded under unbelief. Thus many men come near to Faith, and yet miſcarry by reaſon of a miſunderſtanding of the Goſpel.

But where God goes on with the deſign of Converſion, he ſo directs the humbled Sinner in his Attention to the *Goſpel*, as to bring him at the next Step to *an hearty believing* of it. So the *Jews*, *Acts* 2. attending diligently to the Goſpel preached by *Peter*, at length *gladly received it*, which they could not have done, if they had not heartily believed it.— This is that which the Apoſtle calls, *Believing of the record which God hath given of his Son*, 1 John 5. 10. and which is uſually and fitly called *Aſſenting Faith*.

This Aſſenting Faith conſiſts in two things.

1. A Perception, or underſtanding of the Doctrine of Salvation in the Goſpel.

2. A Reception, or taking of it for Truth, upon God's own Teſtimony.

1. *Firſt*, The humbled Soul by a ſerious Attention to the Goſpel, comes to underſtand what is the Report and Account which it gives of the Salvation that is in Chriſt. Nothing can be believed that is not underſtood; the Soul muſt apprehend the ſenſe and import of that which is propounded to belief, before it can believe the truth of it.

Now the ſum of the Goſpel which is to be known and believed to Salvation, is. *That God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him, might not periſh, but have everlaſting life,* 3 John 16.— or as it is Epitomized in 1 *John* 5. *This is the record, That God has given us eternal life, and this eternal life is in his Son.* — Which may be thus plainly expreſſed: That whereas the Law condemns every Sinner to Eternal Death, and Juſtice requires Execution; Jeſus Chriſt hath ſatisfied the Law in his own Death and Righteouſneſs; ſo that now God may ſave Sinners at his own pleaſure, without offence to his Juſtice. And accordingly he doth moſt ſeriouſly, and freely offer Salvation to *all Sinners* without exception. Particularly,

1. That the Law condems Sinners, and Juſtice demands Execution, is preſumed by the Goſpel, and the Sinner under Soul-humbling Conſideration is convinced of it already; (as has been ſaid) *God ſo loved the world, that — whoſoever believes — might not periſh.* This doth manifeſtly imply, that according to Law, and ſtrictneſs of Juſtice, all Mankind is under Condemnation to periſh eternally, and muſt periſh, if God had not made proviſion for the ſaving of ſome. *The wages of ſin is death,* Rom. 6.

2. That Chriſt not only fulfilled all Righteouſneſs in obeying the Law in his Life, but endured in his Death the Puniſhment which it denounceth againſt Sinners, is manifeſtly the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *Gal.* 3. 10. *Iſa.* 53. 4, 5, 6. 2 *Cor.* 5. *&c.* For though he was not under the Wrath of God, he bore the Pains and Torments in which the Wrath of God is poured out on Sinners, and the anguiſh

anguiſh of a forſaken Perſon, though he was not forſaken. And though his Sufferings were not Eternal, yet they were equivalent to Eternal, by reaſon of the unconceivable greatneſs of them for the time, and the infinite worth of his Perſon.

3. That by this means it is become free for God to ſave Sinners without prejudice to his Juſtice, is clearly aſſerted by the Goſpel, *Rom.* 3. 24, 25, 26. *Herein is declared the Righteouſneſs of God in forgiving ſin*; becauſe he doth it not againſt Law, but upon a full ſatisfaction given to it. So that he is not only *Merciful* in juſtifying him that believes, but *Juſt* in ſhewing that mercy on him.

4. That God in Chriſt hereupon moſt ſeriouſly offers Salvation in a way of free gift to *all Sinners* without Exception. This is indeed the very Goſpel it ſelf, as the Apoſtle *John* expreſſes it; *This is the record, That God has given us eternal life*, &c. What Salvation is, we are plainly taught in *Joh.* 3. 16. *Not to periſh, but to have eternal life*, this is *to be ſaved*. To have Sin pardoned that we may not periſh, and ſo to be brought into an holy Union and Communion with God, which is begun in this Life, and compleated in that to come, and ſo continued to Eternity. This, I ſay, is *Goſpel-Salvation* for a man to be freed from Condemnation for Sin, and to be brought into an holy and bleſſed Conjunction with God. By Nature we are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; How dead? Dead becauſe Sin ſeparates from God; and a man divided from God, is as a Body ſeparated from the Soul; ſo take away Sin by converting, pardoning, and renewing Grace, and the Perſon returns unto union with God, that is, into Life; and this Life once begun by Jeſus Chriſt, is Eternal,

nal. Thus Chriſt's Salvation is ſet forth in plain terms, *Act.* 3. *God ſent Chriſt to bleſs men; to bleſs them*, i. e. to ſave them, and make them happy; to ſave them from *the Curſe* which they are under by Nature, *by turning them from their iniquity, that they may receive remiſſion of ſin, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified*, Act. 26. 18. — By which 'tis evident, That as men cannot be ſaved without pardon, which frees from puniſhment; ſo neither can they be ſaved by pardon, without being turned from Sin it ſelf. Let Pardon go as far as it can without Holineſs, and the Perſon is miſerable ſtill, and dead ſtill, becauſe ſeparated from God.

This is the Salvation which the Goſpel treats of, and which is freely offered to all Sinners without exception. To offer a thing freely, is to ſay, *Here 'tis, Take it, and it ſhall be thine.* So the Goſpel offers Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, as appears if we conſider theſe two things:

Firſt, It is the good pleaſure of God, that whoſoever accepts this Salvation, ſhall have it; that whoſoever will take of the Water of life, ſhould have it without Money, and without Price, *Rev.* 21. *Iſa.* 55. 1. *To as many as receive Jeſus Chriſt, he gives power to be called the ſons of God*, John 1. 12.

2. He invites and commands all to accept it without condition or exception. *Whoſoever will, let him take*, &c. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come, &c.* That word, that *thirſteth*, is no limitation at all; It is but every one that liſteth, or is heartily willing. And acceptance cannot be againſt, or without the Will. As when a man offers Meat at a Table to all that have an Appetite, 'tis all one

one as to offer it to all. So reſt is promiſed to the weary, *Matth.* 11. *i. e.* to all that will come for it. So the grant of Salvation in the Goſpel is abſolute and unconditional, unleſs you will (as ſome do) call Acceptance it ſelf the Condition. And ſo 'tis a queſtion, whether any Gift can poſſibly be *unconditional*; and certainly no Gift that is given oblatively by way of offer, can be without Condition. Thus we ſee the Summe of the Goſpel, that muſt be underſtood and believed to Salvation.

Secondly, The humbled Soul ſeriouſly attending the Doctrine of the Goſpel, not only underſtands what is the ſumme and ſubſtance of it; but alſo diſcovers the Authority of God impreſt upon it, and perceives his Voice in it, and ſo receives it for certain truth upon his Teſtimony, and this gives form and being to the faith of *Aſſent*, viz.

An humble and reverential Acquieſcency in the Teſtimony of God, for the infallible certainty of the thing that is affirmed. 1 *John* 5. 10. *He that believeth not God, has made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the teſtimony, that God hath given of his Son*; which implies immediately, that he that doth believe the Teſtimony, believes God in it, and grounds upon his Veracity and never-failing Truth. Believing is grounded on the Veracity of him whom we believe; and conſequently, to deny belief, is to deny or queſtion at leaſt the veracity of the Speaker, *John* 3. 33. When we heartily aſſent to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and are fully perſuaded that 'tis certain truth, and that Perſuaſion is grounded on the truth of God, becauſe we receive it as from his mouth, who cannot deceive us; this is believing the Goſpel.

And this is *the Sixth Step* or degree of this great Work of Salvation; When God by making the Soul heedfully attend to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, cauſes him ſo to underſtand it, and comprehend the ſubſtance of it, and ſo to apprehend and perceive the very Voice and Authority of God in it, that he threupon ſits down concluded in it as undeniable and undubitable, becauſe God affirms it. See 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13.

The man had often heard the Goſpel before (it may be), and knew the Contents of it, and did not deny the truth of them, but let them paſs for things as commonly received for truth, in the place where he lived, maintained by Learned Men, and delivered down from Generation to Generation; ſo that it would have been matter of ſhame to him to have called them into queſtion: But now he has another ſenſe and reliſh of the things themſelves, than he had before, and is ſtrongly perſuaded of the certain truth of them, by the invincible Authority of God, from whom, as his Oracles, he receives them.

The *Seventh Step* or degree of this great Work is,

Fiducial Faith A reſting or truſting on the Mercy of God in Chriſt, in hope of his Salvation tendred to Sinners in the Goſpel.

Theſe two Graces (if indeed they be two) *Faith* and *Hope*, are ſo nearly united and conjoined, that the one can neither be, nor be defined without the other. *Rom.* 4. 18. *Abraham believed in hope*; and *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance, or ſubſiſtence of things hoped for.*

Hope is the Intention of the Soul to that good which a man is perſuaded he may attain.

Faith

Faith (fiducial) is a man's reſting or truſting in that thing, or Perſon, by means, or help, or favour whereof, he hopes to attain the good which he intends; as *Act.* 3. 5. the impotent man expected to receive an Alms from the Apoſtles, and truſted in their ſuppoſed Liberality. So *Rom.* 4. 18. *Abraham* hoped to become a Father of many Nations, and truſted in the Alſufficiency and Faithfulneſs of God. So all Hope is grounded in fiducial Faith, and all fiducial Faith exerts it ſelf in Hope. Hope looks at the end which is intended, and Faith at that by means and help whereof it is to be attained. [D. *Ward de fide Juſtificante*].

But notwithſtanding this diſtinction, It is commonly obſerved, that the Scripture oft-times expreſſes both *Faith* and *Hope* by one and the ſame word; and refers Hope as well to the means as to the end. As when we read of *Hoping in God, hoping in Chriſt*, and *hoping in mercy*, which is certainly all one with truſting in God, and truſting in Chriſt, and truſting in Mercy, *&c.* as the Learned Dr. *Ward* obſerves.

Again, *Truſting* is commonly referred to the End, as well as to the Means, as *Pſal.* 22. 8. *He truſted in God that he would deliver him. He truſted that God would deliver him*, there is that which is diſtinctly called Hope; *and he truſted in God*, there is that which is more preciſely called Faith. So *Phil.* 2. 24. *I truſt in the Lord*, &c. whereas in *v.* 19. 'tis, *I hope in the Lord*, as the original word ſignifies. And beſides, our *Engliſh* Tranſlation commonly renders the word *hope* by *truſt*, as *Rom.* 15. 24. 1 *Cor.* 16. 7. 2 *Cor.* 13. 6, *&c.* Plainly implying, that there is no abſurdity in taking them both for one and the ſame act of the Soul, which

which as 'tis referred to the *end*, is called *Hope*, and as referred to the *means*, is called *Faith*. As *we are ſaved by faith*, Eph. 2. 8. or as *Rom.* 8. 24. *We are ſaved by hope*. I ſhall therefore for plainneſs treat of fiducial Faith and Hope as *one Act*, not as affecting to follow the Schoolmen or others, who go that way, but as intending the beſt advantage of the Underſtanding, which is uſually diſturbed by an unneceſſary multiplication of things; And if Scripture commonly ſpeaks of both as one Act (which is confeſſed) why may they not be ſo handled?

Obj. If any object that in 1 *Cor.* 13. 13. Where *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity* are enumerated as three diſtinct Graces.

Anſ. I anſwer. If we take Faith for Aſſenting Faith, which is primarily and moſt properly Faith, the number is made good; and indeed it is moſt probable that the Apoſtle intends that *Faith* whereby we believe thoſe thing now, which we ſhall hereafter ſee; as by *Hope* he means the confident expectation of that Good which we ſhall hereafter enjoy. Theſe things premiſed, I proceed to the Deſcription of *fiducial Faith*, Viz.

A Reſting or truſting in the mercy of God in Chriſt, in hope of his Salvation tendered to Sinners in the Goſpel.

Here we are diſtinctly to conſider,

1. The end of Faith, the *Salvation of God.*
2. The tendency of Faith to that end, and that is *in Hope.*
3. The foundation of that Hope, *the mercy of God in Chriſt.*

Firſt,

Firſt, The End of Faith, *i. e.* that which it looks to attain, is the Salvation of Chriſt propounded in the Goſpel, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9. What this Salvation is, was ſhewed before: *Viz.* Pardon of Sin, and an holy union and conjunction with God. *John* 3. 16. *not to periſh* (*i. e.* to be condemned for Sin) *but to have everlaſting life*; (i. e. be united to God, and enjoy him, which is the Soul's life.) Sin ſeparates from God meritoriouſly, and legally, by virtue of the Curſe, binding the Sinner over to an everlaſting Separation from his glorious preſence, and to everlaſting Deſtruction. And it ſeparates from him naturally and formally, though there were no puniſhment by Law aſſigned to the Sinner; for *what fellowſhip has light with darkneſs?* Now ſeparation from God is man's ſpiritual Death, even as the ſeparation of the Body and Soul is his natural Death. So men are by nature dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, as well as liable to death for them. Death is the work of Sin, as well as its wages. And the Salvation of Chriſt conſiſts as well in delivering men from *Sin* it ſelf, as from the puniſhment of it, *Matth.* 1. 21. And if he did not this as well as the other, he could never make them happy. Sin would keep them miſerable ſtill, though they were redeemed from the pain of ſenſe. Then a man is ſaved, when *he is brought to God*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. *i. e.* into an union and conjunction with him. And indeed pardon of Sin is but in order to this part, as the principle of mans Salvation. The Law ſubjecting the Sinner to his Sin, and giving him up to Satan as the moſt ſignal part of his puniſhment, it is impoſſible that he ſhould be delivered from Sin, unleſs the bond of the Law,

the

the Curſe, I mean,—— which holds him under Sin, be looſed, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. This then is the End of Faith, Salvation from Hell and Sin; Pardon, and an holy Conjunction with God.

Secondly, The tendency or motion of fiducial Faith to this end, *i. e.* toward Salvation, is in a way of *Hope*. Faith reſts on Chriſt in hope of everlaſting Life. All fiducial Reliance or truſting in any thing or perſon, in reference to any good to be attained, is in hope of that good, When a Man truſts in a Phyſician for his Health, 'tis in hope of obtaining it. When a rich Man truſts in his Riches, 'tis in hope of ſafety and favour among Men, *&c.* When the *Jews* truſted, or were ſaid to truſt on the broken Reed *Egypt*, it was in hope of aid from thence.—— So to truſt in Chriſt for Salvation, is to hope for his Salvation. Tit. 1. 2. *The faith of God's elect is in hope of everlaſting life.*—— Now *Hope* (as was ſaid before) is the Intention or Deſire of the Soul to ſome good thing which is looked upon as attainable.

} *Some put in* (difficulty), *but that is not always competent to the object of hope.*

Hope therefore implies; *Firſt*,

1. An earneſt deſire of the thing hoped for. *Secondly*,

2. A Perſwaſion in the mind that it may be attained. Where-ever theſe two meet, there is *Hope*, and no where elſe; No man hopes (but as the word is ſometimes uſed Catachreſtically) for that which he deſires not. A Man may deſire that which he has no hope of. As Men totally deſpairing under ſenſe of God's Wrath have a deſire

a deſire of Pardon; elſe they could not be grieved as they are for want of it, but they have no hope of Pardon. A Man may wiſh himſelf an Eagle, or a Swallow, as *David*, but can have no hope to be ſo. For beſides deſire, Hope always implies a Perſwaſion, that the good deſired may be attained, or (which is more) that it ſhall be attained. Devils may have a deſire to be out of Torment; and 'tis certain they have ſo, but no hope of it, becauſe they cannot believe it attainable. The lame man, *Acts* 5. hoped to receive Money of the Apoſtles, as deſiring it, and thinking they had it to give him. But as for a Cure, he deſired that alſo, but hoped not for it, becauſe he did not believe at firſt that they had ſuch an healing-power about them.—— He that hopes for any thing, looks on it as attainable; and the more likely he apprehends it to be attained, the more confident he is in his hope. And if he looks upon it not only as probable, but as certain, then 'tis full Aſſurance of hope, as *Heb.* 6. 11.

Now to apply this to the caſe in hand. When God has brought the humble Soul to an hearty believing of the Goſpel, he thereby works him up to an hearty deſire of the Salvation therein propounded; and withal perſwades him, that he may for his own part attain it; and ſo the Soul begins to hope for everlaſting Life. The Soul underſtanding already, and believing the Goſpel, ſees ſuch an excellency in the Salvation of God, as makes him vehemently deſire it; he now accounts it the greateſt happineſs in the World to be delivered from Sin and Hell, and joined unto God, though he made never ſo light of it before, and earneſtly crys out, Oh, that I might have

have peace with God, Union with God, and God to be my God for ever! Oh, that I might eat Bread in my Father's houſe! *Luke* 15. Thus the Merchant having ſeen the Pearl, (like *Achan*, preſently fell in love with it, and) ſo importunately deſired it, that he ſtuck not at ſelling all he had to buy it. This is that *Hunger* and *Thirſt* to which the promiſe is made, *Matth.* 5. 6. *Iſaiah* 55. 1. and elſewhere. This is that *willingneſs* which makes a Soul capable of the Water of Life, *Rev.* 22. 17. and that *asking* of which our Saviour ſpeaks, John 4. 10. *If thou hadſt known the gift*, &c. *thou wouldeſt have asked.* God makes the humble Soul in the former act of Faith to know his Gift, and to believe the worth and goodneſs of it; and therefore now he earneſtly deſires and asks it. And here we ſee at the very entrance, how far Men are from ſaving-faith and hope in Chriſt, that do not earneſtly deſire after God and Holineſs. A Man can never hope for that which he deſires not; and to deſire after God, and not hate Sin and all Unrighteouſneſs, is utterly impoſſible; as for a Man to deſire to be in the light, and yet not be out of love with darkneſs.

No wicked Man, while he continues ſo, has any true deſire after the Salvation of God in Chriſt. Freedom from puniſhment he may deſire, but Holineſs and Union with God he deſires not, nor can he have any good affection towards it; yea, he ſays to God, *Depart from me, I deſire not the knowledge of the moſt High*, Job 21. 14. Now the knowledge of the moſt High is Life eternal, *John* 17. 3. So that wicked Men, whatſoever Profeſſion they may make of Faith and Hope in Chriſt for Life eternal, do not ſo much

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as deſire Life Eternal—— No? you will ſay; Is there any that doth not deſire Eternal Life? God, that knows the Language of their hearts, and will not wrong them in the interpretation of it, gives us this account of what is ſaid by Wicked men in general within themſelves; *We deſire not the knowledge of the Almighty:* We deſire not his acquaintance; no communion with him. They had rather ſtarve, than go and dwell in the Father's Houſe, to eat bread there, and live.

2. As the belief of the Goſpel makes the humbled Soul earneſtly deſire the Salvation of God, ſo it gives him a perſuaſion that *he may* attain it, and this makes his deſire an hopeful deſire, *i. e.* it gives it the nature of *Hope.* A man that rightly underſtands and believes the Goſpel, and earneſtly deſires the Salvation propounded in it, muſt needs apprehend a poſſibility, at leaſt, of his own Salvation, while he remains under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel. 'For (ſays the Soul) 'if the Salvation of Chriſt be freely offered to all 'to whom the Goſpel is preached, *i. e.* If it be the 'good pleaſure of God, that whoſoever accepts 'this Salvation, ſhould have it; and if he invites 'and commands all to accept it, without any other 'condition, or any exception, then there is fair 'probability that I may have my part in it; I am 'ſure I deſire it more than any thing in the world; 'and though I be never ſo unworthy, yet the gift 'is free: And though the Law condemns me, yet 'Chriſt has ſo anſwered the Law, that God may 'with honour ſave me, if he will. Who knows then, 'but even I may attain everlaſting Life by Jeſus 'Chriſt? —— under this perſuaſion now the humbled Soul earneſtly deſires the Salvation of Chriſt, and this is Hope. So the Prodigal, as he hungrily

grily deſired to eat of his Father's Bread, ſo he had a good perſuaſion, that at his Father's Houſe he might have entertainment; that his Father would not ſhut the Doors againſt him, but receive him; and in this hope he went. The Merchant, *Matth.* 13. had not only a deſire to be Owner of the Pearl, but a perſuaſion, that ſelling all that he had, he might certainly entitle himſelf to it. So he that comes to the water of Life, comes not only in a thirſting deſire after it, but under an hopeful apprehenſion, that he may take, and have it freely for his own refreſhment, that his Soul may live. This is very amply expreſſed in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 2. 16. *We knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt: Even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt.* — 1. They knew, and believed the Goſpel, that Juſtification, pardon of Sin, and ſo Salvation, is to be attained only through Jeſus Chriſt. 2. This Juſtification, or Pardon and Salvation, they earneſtly deſired, elſe they would not have proſecuted it. 3. They had a perſuaſion that they might poſſibly attain it, as well as others, and ſo they believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that they might actually attain it.

This perſuaſion is utterly wanting in Deviſs, and deſpairing Sinners; though they ſhould be never ſo earneſt in deſire of Salvation, yet they have no perſuaſion that they ſhall, or may obtain it. The former having no Goſpel for it, the latter no right underſtanding, nor true belief of the Goſpel; and therefore they have no hope, no truſt in Jeſus Chriſt. And as this Perſuaſion grows ſtronger and ſtronger in him that ſincerely hungers

hungers and thirſts after Chriſt, ſo his Hope gets up to better meaſures and degrees.

In theſe two things we ſee the Father's drawing of Souls to Jeſus Chriſt, *John* 4. 44. It is a work done by the Goſpel. 1. Men hear the Goſpel. 2. Hearing it, they learn it; *i. e.* they believe it with an aſſenting Faith. They believe 1. The Excellency of Salvation as propounded in the Goſpel, and ſo they deſire it. 2. They believe the free offer and grant that is there made of it, to poor Sinners, without exception; and ſo they get a perſuaſion, that they themſelves may attain it, and thus they come to him for it; they come to him in their hopeful deſire of his Salvation.

Thus much of the end of Faith, which is *Salvation*; and the tendency of Faith to that end, in a way of *hope*.

Thirdly, The next thing to be conſidered, is the ground or foundation of this Hope, *The free mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt.*

In all hope the expecting Soul has ſomewhat to reſt and bear upon as the foundation and baſis of its hope: and that reſting and leaning is the formal proper act of a fiducial Faith. The lame man, *Acts* 5. hoped that the Apoſtles would give him Money, and grounded that hope in their ſuppoſed Liberality. So he truſted in their Liberality in hope of an Alms. The Governour, *Acts* 24. 26. hoped for a Bribe, and grounded that hope upon the love ('tis likely) which he ſuppoſed *Paul*'s Friends had for him. So he truſted in the intereſt that *Paul* had in his monied Friends in hope of a Bribe. Thus Believers hope for the Salvation of God propounded in the Goſpel, and

ground their hope on his free Mercy in Chriſt; *i. e.* They truſt on the free Mercy of God in Chriſt in hope of Salvation. As in Faith of aſſent there is a perſuaſion of the truth of the Doctrine contained in the Goſpel, and a reſting on the Teſtimony of God in that perſuaſion; So in Fiducial Faith there is an hoping for Salvation, propounded in the Goſpel, and a reſting on the Mercy of God in Chriſt, in that hope.

Now that *the mercy of God in Chriſt* is the proper Ground whereon the Soul reſts it ſelf in the Act of Saving Faith, may thus appear.

1. Man being an Offender, and guilty of Death Eternal, cannot be ſaved but in a way of *Pardon*, which is an act of Mercy. And thereforefore he can have no hope of Salvation from God, but as he is a merciful God. He that's bound over to the puniſhment of Eternal Death, muſt either ſuffer it, or be forgiven it. Now nothing forgives but *Mercy*. Look upon God as Almighty, and it ſpeaks terror to the guilty Soul. Power makes him able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell. Look upon him as Juſt, and Juſtice ſpeaks terror, as that which makes him hate Sin, and puniſh Sinners. But conſider him as he is *merciful*, and pitiful to poor Creatures in their miſery, and there you have ſome ground of hope. Hope can never find whereon to reſt the ſole of its foot, till you come to a ſight of God *as merciful.*— *God be merciful to me a ſinner, Luke* 18. 13. He could light on nothing in all the World to ſtay his Hope upon, but Mercy. The poor Leper, *Matth.* 8. urged our Saviour with his power to make him clean; but if he had not had ſome hopeful conceit of his willingneſs to relieve poor Supplicants

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in ſuch a caſe, he would never have asked him for the cure. He that expects a Debt, may truſt in the Juſtice of him that owes it: But he that expects an Act of Grace, muſt reſt on the *mercy* of him from whom he expects it, or he has nothing to truſt to.

Obj. You will ſay a Believer hopes in the Faithfulneſs of God, and the infallible Truth of his Word, as well as in his Mercy.

Anſ. I grant it, A believer hopes in the Truth of God; but 'tis only as his Truth and Faithfulneſs doth aſſure the Soul of his *Mercifulneſs*. God profeſſes and declares himſelf merciful, the Soul believes that he is ſo, and will approve himſelf ſo, becauſe it judges him faithful; and therefore hopes in Mercy ſo declared. So the Soul relying on *Mercy*, relies upon the Power of God, but only as Mercy turns and uſes it to the ſaving of Sinners; otherwiſe he is true to puniſh according to his Threatnings, as well as he is true to ſave according to his Promiſe. So he is mighty to deſtroy as well as to ſave. Yea, the Soul relying on Mercy, relies alſo on the *Juſtice* of God, as he is juſt in ſhewing mercy. But all this while *Mercy* lies at the bottom, as the foundation of a Believer's Hope. Let God be never ſo mighty, never ſo wiſe, never ſo faithful, never ſo righteous, all this ſpeaks no encouragement to the poor humbled Sinner, but all againſt him, till *Mercy* be diſcovered, and then ſome ground appears for him to build his hopes upon. And now the other Attributes of God give their aſſiſtance, and bear up Expectation.

2. But yet no man can ſafely hope in the *abſolute Mercy* of God for Salvation, but only in the

Mercy of God conſider'd as he is merciful *in Jeſus Chriſt*; *i. e.* as he is merciful, ſo as to provide and accept a ſatisfaction to Juſtice in the Death of his Son, and ſo to offer Salvation freely to Sinners; or in the words of Scripture, *As loving the world ſo as to give his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believes on him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* For,

1. If the humbled Sinner conſiders Mercy *abſolutely*, Juſtice preſently comes in, and damps his hopes of Salvation. For as it is not to be expected that God, though he be *Almighty*, ſhould do any thing which his Wiſdom doth not allow of, becauſe he is infinitely Wiſe as well as Almighty; ſo neither can it be hoped, though he be infinite in *mercy*, that he ſhould do any thing in a way of pity to a Sinner, which his *Juſtice* will not bear, becauſe he is juſt as he is merciful. Now Juſtice requires that the Law ſhould proceed, and that the Soul that has ſinned ſhould die, *Gal.* 3. 10. *Deut.* 27. 26. But God in giving his Son to die for Sinners, has ſo ſatisfied the Law, that Juſtice has nothing at all to plead againſt the Salvation of any one Sinner whom God will pleaſe to ſave, *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. By this means God has ſo ordered it, that he is highly *juſt* in ſhewing *mercy* to the Sinner, as having laid the puniſhment which belonged to him, upon his own Son. And therefore Mercy thus conſidered, is a ſufficient ground of hope, but not otherwiſe; as *Heb.* 9. 21. *Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion*; no hope of Pardon and Salvation, but through the Death of Chriſt, though God be never ſo merciful.

Secondly,

Secondly, If the humbled Soul conſiders Mercy abſolutely, he can have no Aſſurance of the Terms, on which he will ſave Sinners, ſuppoſing that he will ſave any of them; and ſo the Soul may object againſt his own hopes of Salvation.

Obj. 1. It may be God will be ſo merciful as to ſave Sinners, that have not broken out into groſs wickedneſs, but have reſtrained themſelves to ſome bounds of fairneſs and morality: And 'tis great mercy if he will ſave ſuch. But I have exceeded in Sin, and done evil with an high hand.

Obj. 2. It may be he will be ſo merciful as to ſave Sinners that have ſinned out of ignorance, as being uninformed and unconvinced of the evil of the things wherein they have offended; and 'tis great mercy if he will ſave ſuch. But I have rebelled againſt the light, and ſinned againſt knowledge, and the expreſs dictates of my own Conſcience.

Obj. 3. It may be God will be ſo merciful as to ſave Sinners that accept the firſt or ſecond call that he gives them to Repentance, and cloſe with offered Grace betimes, and 'tis great mercy if he will ſave ſuch Sinners: But alas, I have withſtood many gracious Invitations, and neglected Salvation when it has been offered to me God knows how many times, and ſo my day may be expired. It may be God will be ſo merciful as to ſave Sinners, that have not ſignally contradicted their Profeſſions in the courſe of their lives; who, as they have not practiſed Godlineſs, ſo have never much pretended to it; and 'tis great mercy if he will ſave ſuch, or ſome of them: But I have diſſembled with him, and lived the life of the Un-

godly under the profeſſion of Godlineſs; yea, I have given up my Name to Chriſt, and yet have given my hand to Satan and my own Luſts.

Object. 4. It may be God will be ſo merciful as to ſave Sinners that have not ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and 'tis great Mercy if he will vouchſafe to ſave ſome of them: But I fear I have ſinned the Sin that's never to be pardoned.

Object. 5. It may be God will ſave ſome great and eminent Sinners, but they are ſuch only, as are within the eternal purpoſe of Election, and he ſhews great mercy in ſaving them; but I fear I am under the decree of Reprobation rather. And if you tell the humble Soul, that they that Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt never heartily repent of it; and no Man in this Life can certainly conclude himſelf reprobated, becauſe for ought any knows he may repent and turn to God; He will yet object,

Object. 6. It may be God will be ſo merciful, as to ſave Sinners that are deeply and kindly humbled for their Sins, and full of the Spirit of mourning; and 'tis Mercy indeed if he will ſave ſuch. But I have an hard heart, and an uncontrite Spirit; I cannot grieve for Sin to any purpoſe, though I know my ſelf to be one of the chief of Sinners. All theſe, and many more ſuch Objections will be unanſwerable, if the Soul conſiders only *the abſolute Mercy of God.* For God may indeed be merciful, and glorioufly merciful in ſaving Sinners, though he ſhould only ſave ſome of the moſt reſtrained, and leaſt provoking, the ſooneſt yielding, and moſt ſignally humbled and mourning Sinners; and ſo the Soul that judges

worſe of himſelf, can have no hope of his Salvation. But the Mercy of God in Chriſt, is ſuch as that he freely offers his Salvation to all, even the worſt of Sinners to whom the Goſpel is preached, inviting and commanding them to accept it, and rely upon him for it. And this anſwers all Objections.

The worſt the Soul can ſay againſt himſelf, exempts him not from the number of *Sinners*; and Salvation is freely offered to all Sinners in general. He is one of them, let him make as bad of himſelf as he can. And though he thinks it never ſo unreaſonable for him to hope for Mercy, yet no reaſon in the World can have any force againſt the Command of the moſt High God, which requires him to repoſe his hope and truſt in Chriſt for his Salvation. Thus 'tis evident, that the ground of a Chriſtian's hope, or that which he relies and reſts upon in his hope of Salvation, is the *free Mercy of God in Chriſt*. And therefore is *Faith* commonly in Scripture called a *truſting*, or *believing in Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe the Satisfaction which he has given to the Law, and the free tender of Salvation which he makes in the Goſpel to Sinners in general, is the only ſufficient ground that any Soul has to ſtay and reſt upon, in hope of his Salvation, *John* 3. 15, 16, 18, 36. *John* 6. 35. 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. *Acts* 11. 17. *Acts* 16. 31. and many other places.

Faith is a believing *in God*. But 'tis a believing on him looked upon and conſidered as he is *in Jeſus Chriſt*. The Soul cannot believe or truſt in God for Salvation, but as he truſts in Chriſt. 1 Pet. 1. 21. *Who by him believe on God who raiſed him from the dead*, &c.

It is a truſting or hoping in the Mercy of God. *Pſalm* 15. 5. *Pſalm* 147. 11. But 'tis a truſting in Mercy only as 'tis expreſſed, diſplayed, and offered to Sinners in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

It is a truſting or hoping in the Word. *Pſalm* 119. 42, 74. in as much as it declares and propounds that Mercy of God in Chriſt, on which alone the Soul may reſt it ſelf in hopes of Salvation.

Thus have we ſeen the Sinner brought by the ſeveral Steps of Conſideration, Conviction, Humiliation, *&c.* to a fiducial Faith, or believing on Jeſus Chriſt. And now is he in the ſtate of *Effectual Calling* or *Converſion*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 13.

Then Men are called and converted, when they believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as 'tis fully proved in *Rom.* 1. 16. with 1 *Cor.* 1. 24.

Now is the Soul ſet ſafe from Condemnation, and therefore is this Faith called *Juſtifying Faith*, *Rom.* 5. 1.

Now is the Soul adopted and entitled to everlaſting Life. And therefore is Faith called *ſaving Faith*, or *believing to Salvation*, Heb. 10.

Yea, now the Soul is by the work of the Spirit poſſeſſed of all Graces neceſſary to qualify and prepare him for Heaven, the heart being purified by Faith, *Acts* 15. 9. and taken up by the Lord Jeſus for his Habitation, *Epheſ.* 2. 22. with *Epheſ.* 3. 17. where-ever there is *Faith* in Chriſt, there is alſo *Love to God*, *Obedience*, *Patience*, *Humility*, *Self-denial*, and all other Graces in which the Law is written on renewed Hearts. The Exerciſes and Encreaſes whereof come next to be conſidered.

The Sum of all is,

1. The Sinner takes the eſtate of his Soul into *ſerious Conſideration.*

Ezek. 18. 28. *He conſidereth, and turneth away from his Tranſgreſſion.*

2. He finds himſelf to be in a loſt and periſhing Condition.

Luke 15. 17. *I periſh for hunger.*

3. The ſight of himſelf in this eſtate affects his Soul with deep Sorrow and diſtreſſing Trouble.

Acts 2. 37. *When they heard this, they were pierced at the heart.*

4. This diſtreſs puts him upon a ſtudious conſultation, and enquiry for a Remedy of his Eſtate.

And they ſaid, Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?

5. Upon this enquiry, God directs him to a ſerious and heedful attention to the Goſpel.

Acts 11. 14. *Send for* Peter,——*he ſhall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy Houſe ſhall be ſaved.* And Acts 10. 33. *We are all,* &c.

6. Thus attending the Goſpel, he comes to underſtand and believe the Doctrine therein contained, and to receive it for certain truth upon God's Teſtimony.

Acts 2. 41. *They that gladly received his word, were baptized.* John 6. 45. *They ſhall be all taught of God. Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me.*

7. Upon the belief of the Doctrine of the Goſ-

Gal. 2. 16. *Knowing that a man is not juſtified*

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pel, he proceeds to an hearty reliance on the free Mercy of God in Chriſt, in hope of his Salvation. For,

by the works of the Law, but by the Faith of Chriſt. Even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the Faith of Chriſt.

1. Believing the Goſpel, he is informed of the excellency of Chriſt's Salvation, and ſo deſires it earneſtly for himſelf.

2. Believing the Goſpel, he ſees this Salvation is freely offered to Sinners in general, and ſo conceives hope that he may have it.

3. Believing the Goſpel, he ſees that Salvation is procured and granted only through the Mercy of God in Chriſt, and therefore he reſts only upon that Mercy in hope of his Salvation.

PART

PART II.

Of the Progreſs of a Believer from his *Converſion* to his *Perfection*, under the work of *Sanctification*.

1 PETER II. 2.

As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

THE Text is an Exhortation to an earneſt deſire after the Word. Where note firſt,

1. The Perſons exhorted, they are lately converted Chriſtians, compared to new-born Babes; ſo young and incompleat Chriſtians are called, 1 Cor. 3. 1. *And I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt.* Babes in Chriſt, becauſe the work of Sanctification had gone on but a little way in them, they being hitherto very Carnal.

2. The matter of the Exhortation; *a deſire after the Word.* Where note, Firſt,

1. *Firſt,*

Firſt, The object of this deſire, *the Word*, compared to pure Milk, the ſincere Milk of the Word, (that is) the Word which is for you, as pure Breaſt-milk is for the new-born Babe, ſweet and pleaſing, nouriſhing and ſtrengthening, the means appointed to the perfecting of the Work of Sanctification, John 17. 17. *Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth.* And Edification unto Glory, Acts 20. 32. *The word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.* Secondly,

Secondly, *The deſire it ſelf*, deſcribed by the appetite of new-born Infants to the Nurſes Milk, (that is) a vehement and importunate deſire, and ſuch as will not otherwiſe be ſatisfied.

Thirdly, *The end of this deſire*, growth in Grace, *that ye may grow thereby.* What that is in which they ſhould intend a growth, appears plainly by the Sequel of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe, to be *Faith* and *Holineſs*. The Grace wherewith the Souls of Chriſtians are qualified by the Spirit of God unto Salvation, as 'tis expreſſed in the laſt words of the next Epiſtle, *Grow in Grace.* Growth is the gradual proceſs of living Creatures to their due Meaſures and Maturity. And of all the growths, the growth of Children, which is here the Apoſtle's Similitude, is a very ſlow and imperceptible Motion. Such is the tendency of ſaving Grace in the Souls of Chriſtians towards its proper and purpoſed Perfection. *Mark* 4. 27. the Seed ſprings and grows up we know not how. And hence we way obſerve,

Direct. 1. *That ſaving Grace begun in converted Souls, goes gradually on to its perfection under the ſanctifying work of God.*—— Juſtification is perfected at once, and with it Adoption. But the work of Holineſs is begun in low degrees, and brought on by ſteps to it its intended height and fulneſs. See this proved in Phil. 1. 6. *He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* So again in Prov. 4. 18. *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* So likewiſe Hoſea 6. 3. *His going forth is as the morning.* And Mark 4. 26. *The Kingdom of God is as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground,* &c. The Kingdom of God is his work of Grace in the Souls of Men, in which he begins that, which in its perfection is the Kingdom of Glory. So *Grotius*, and ſome others, underſtand thoſe three Ages, 1 John 2. 12, 13. *I write unto you, little Children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you. I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young Men, becauſe you have overcome the wicked one.*

But I ſhall proſecute this Doctrine in a diſtinct Conſideration of the ſeveral advances of Grace in the Souls of Chriſtians towards perfection, from their firſt Converſion. And that in ten ſucceſſive periods of their Motion. Firſt,

The firſt Period or Point of a Chriſtian's Motion towards Perfection; that I ſhall ſpeak of, is

1. A vehement purſuit of ſome clear and comfortable aſſurance of Salvation. When once Men are

are brought through the Terrors of the Law by the Invitations of the Goſpel, to believe in Chriſt for his Salvation, they preſently become very laborious to get ſome comfortable Aſſurance that they are in a ſaved Eſtate.

They do not indeed neglect the duties of Obedience, the mortifying of Luſts, well ordering of their Lives, and the glory of God as the end of all. But that which they eſpecially and moſt ambitiouſly intend now at their firſt ſetting out, is a Soul-quieting certainty, that all is well between God and them.

Though they do believe in Chriſt, and know that he that believeth ſhall be ſaved; yet 'tis uſually a great while, before they can clearly underſtand themſelves to be Believers in Chriſt, and by Faith ſaved Perſons. A man muſt be (of neceſſity) a Believer, before he can know himſelf to be ſo; and Faith is ſometimes very long unevident to him that has it. And though he do perceive the believing act in himſelf, and dares not deny it; yet he is very doubtful whether it be true ſaving Faith, or no, and very impatient of the doubt: And this is commonly the main Intention of young Converts, and their great affair, to aſſure themſelves that they are in Chriſt, and not periſhing with the World.

'Tis true, the very act of Faith, through the Grace of Chriſt, brings in a ſweet calmneſs of Spirit, eaſing the Soul of thoſe deſpairing and tormenting fears with which 'twas overwhelmed before; and therefore Faith it ſelf is in Scripture called, *a reſting on the Lord, and a ſtaying of the mind on God*, Iſa. 26. 3.

But a poſitive Aſſurance of ones being in the ſtate of Salvation, is a further benefit, and muſt

be ſought after in the uſe of means, appointed to the making of our Calling and Election ſure: And this is uſually the great ſtudy of new Converts, as *Hoſea* 6. 2. *He will receive us*; that was it in proſecution whereof they ſtirred up themſelves to follow on to know the Lord.

And that they do mainly intend and follow this, appears.

Firſt, In their eager deſire after Ordinances and means appointed to this end, to confirm Faith, and work aſſurance. As ſoon as the *Eunuch* was converted, he was preſently ambitious to be baptized upon the firſt opportunity. *Acts* 8. 36, 37. *And the Eunuch ſaid, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayſt. And he anſwered, and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him.* Baptiſm being a confirming Ordinance, a ſeal of the Promiſe and Covenant of Grace, he was very deſirous to have that Doctrine ſealed to him by waſhing, which he had lately heard preached out of *Iſa.* 53. And *Paul*, when converted, aſſayed to join himſelf with the Church: Communion with Saints being a good means to inform us of our own good eſtate, *Acts* 9. 26. *And when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to join himſelf to the Diſciples.*

2*dly*, Their earneſt hearkening after Promiſes, and ſuch parts of the Word, as declare the love of God to poor Sinners. They are not at firſt ſo ſtudious of that Word, which ſets forth that Reward which Saints ſhall have in Heaven, as of that Word of Promiſe which ſerves to give humbled

bled Souls notice of their Intereſt in Chriſt, and the Love of God. They go to every Sermon that they hear, in hope of a word of peace: And are mightily taken with that Word which ſets forth the love of Chriſt, deſcending and ſtooping down to poor unworthy Wretches: Though they heartily like a *Boanerges*, a Son of Thunder, and bleſs God that ever they have heard the Terrors of the Lord in the Doctrine of the Law; yet now they are ſore and wounded, and moſt earneſtly deſire after *Barnabas*, the Son of Conſolation, to pour ſome Oil into their Wounds, and give them ſome heart-reviving Cordials. New-born Babes deſire Milk, words of comfort from the breaſts of Conſolation, *Iſa.* 66. 11. *That ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.*

3*dly*, Their great fear of deceiving themſelves. Though they love Promiſes, and ſearch Scripture for them, and gladly go many miles to hear them explained and preached, yet they fear to apply them to themſelves: Knowing their hearts are deceitful, they are always afraid, leſt they ſhould take up too good thoughts of themſelves. And though they vehemently long after ſpiritual Comfort, yet they heartily fear leſt they ſhould receive it too ſoon, before they have a right to it, or are duly prepared for it.

4*thly*, Their continual enquiring after Marks and Signs of Perſons being in a ſtate of Grace. No Sermon ſuits them, if it be not in ſome parts of it made up of Notes, diſtinguiſhing between Believers and Unbelievers: And in diſcourſing with godly men, they are always asking Queſtions of this kind, How may one know that he

is converted, and believes in Chriſt to Salvation? *&c.* What are the properties of a ſincere godly man? What is the loweſt Evidence of Grace, which is not found in a graceleſs Perſon? May not an Hypocrite go thus and thus far? *&c.* Theſe and ſuch Enquiries, ſhew what their minds are ſet upon; (to wit) *to be aſſured*, that they are converted, and in a ſtate of Grace. But they that make light of ſuch Enquiries, and the notes of a ſaving Converſion, ſeem not to have known the Terror of the Lord, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11.

5*thly*, Their uſual trouble at the inconformity of their Experiences about the work of Grace, to theſe of other godly men: ſo deſirous are they to get beyond doubt of their ſincerity, and ſafety, that they are always comparing themſelves with what others have (or think they have) found. They are preſently dejected with fear, leſt they ſhould prove unconverted and unbelieving. — Hence come ſuch reaſonings as theſe. — 'I have 'never been ſo humbled and broken for ſin as 'ſuch and ſuch have been: I never felt in my 'ſelf ſuch vehement deſires after Chriſt: Never 'could take ſuch delight in God; never knew 'what 'tis to have ſuch communion with him, 'and therefore I cannot yet ſee ground to judge 'my ſelf in a ſtate of Salvation.'

And though ſuch Chriſtians cannot deny but they have had their hearts humbled for Sin, and their deſires carried out after Chriſt, yet they ſay, that all that they have known of this kind, is nothing to what others uſe to have; weak and faint, and (they fear) to no purpoſe.

And if you tell them they muſt wait for thoſe higher Experiences of delight in God, and communion with him, they think 'tis all one as if you

ſhould tell them, they muſt live at uncertainties, and continue in their wearisome doubtings, till they come up to ſuch attainments; which they fear they never ſhall do.

This alſo is the reaſon why they are ſo often enquiring, whether ever any ſuch as they obtained mercy; ſeeking for Parallels of this ſort, if they may be found; that they may be the more encouraged to hope, that themſelves are in a ſtate of life, when they find ſome like themſelves among the Heirs of Salvation.

And thus their labour and ſtudy is ſtill about *Aſſurance*. As their Queſtion was formerly, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* ſo 'tis now, *How may I know that I ſhall be ſaved?*

I come now the *Uſe*.

Uſe. This argues them to be in an unconverted eſtate, who live contentedly without any Aſſurance of their Salvation. Either

Firſt, Not minding the Queſtion, Whether they are in the ſtate of Grace, or no; let the morrow of Eternity take care for it ſelf: When poor humble Chriſtians are ſeeking reſolution of their Doubts, theſe are at eaſe, caring for none of thoſe things that concern their future eſtate; not remembring their latter end: As 'tis ſaid of *Jeruſalem*, Lam. 1. 9. *Her filthineſs is in her skirts, ſhe remembreth not her laſt end*. Or,

2dly, Conceited of their being in a ſafe eſtate, but upon unſtudied grounds; as if a meer opinion of their being in a good condition, were enough to make it ſo: Saying, *I ſhall have peace*, with an *although* to what may be objected, as *Deut.* 29. 19. *though I walk in the imagination of my own heart*.

But

But oh ſecure Souls, will you conſider,

Firſt, That 'tis a moſt dreadful thing to periſh eternally. The loſs of Heaven offered in the Goſpel is infinitely more than the loſs of a thouſand Worlds. The Torments of Hell, an Everlaſting Fire. It's hard to endure the aking of a Tooth, or the pain of the Stone, for twenty four hours; what is it to be fryed as *Laurentius* on a burning Gridiron? to be flead alive as *Valerian*? and to endure that pain for ever? but alas, theſe are nothing to the anguiſh of the never-dying Worm, the Torments of the never-quenched Fire.

2*dly*, Will you conſider how ſad a thing it muſt needs be to live at uncertainty, whether this ſhall not be our caſe? The Servants of *Pharaoh* in Priſon were ſad, *Gen.* 40. 7. They thought their Dreams imported ſome great matters, and they did ſo indeed, but they knew not what it might be.

3*dly*, To live at a careleſs uncertainty of Salvation, is the way to make our Damnation certain; *For how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation*, Heb. 2. 3.

4*thly*, It's much more your concernment to ſecure your Salvation, than theirs that call upon you to do it: You muſt bear it; *Prov.* 9. 12. God the Father calls you; the Son invites you; the Spirit ſtrives with you; Miniſters pray you to be reconciled, and pray for you, that you may be reconciled: But what is it to God or man, beſide your own gain, if you be ſaved; and your miſery, if you periſh?

5*thly*, You may be ſaved, and be ſure of it, if you do not willingly neglect. *Thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf*, Hoſea 13. 9. *Why will ye die?* Ezek. 18. 31.

The ſecond *Uſe* is for *Comfort* to thoſe that are earneſtly ſeeking and labouring after aſſurance of their Salvation: Even this is an hopeful Evidence of your being in the State of Salvation. Your earneſt and hearty following of the Queſtion, gives an anſwer to it; this is their proper ſtudy, and endeavour, who are turned ſavingly to God, even from their firſt Converſion. Some may object

Obj. That all this is but ſelf-minding, whereas a true Chriſtian ſhould be all for God, whatever comes of himſelf. But

Anſw. I anſwer — Salvation is *for our ſelves*, and coming to Chriſt is *for our ſelves*; as the Apoſtle ſays, *Acts* 2. 40. *Save your ſelves*: And again, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls.*

The third *Uſe* is to exhort all Chriſtians, to uſe diligence to clear up their Aſſurance of Salvation. 'Tis the property of the youngeſt Believers to endeavour it, thoſe of loweſt ſtanding; and 'tis the concernment of every one that *thinks he ſtands*, 1 *Cor.* 10, 12. *to take heed leſt he fall.* That your grounds may be good, and ſafe, take a few Directions.

Direct. 1. Be very careful to acquaint your ſelves with the Word of God. 'Tis the Glaſs in which you may ſee your own faces, and what manner of perſons ye are, *James* 1. 24.

2*dly*, Watch narrowly over your hearts and lives, that you may know what is your general aim and intendment, wherein you exerciſe your ſelves; as *Paul*, *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf*, &c. For a Chriſtian is to try himſelf by his

his main purpoſe and deſign; as the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience.*

3*dly*, Reſt not upon other mens judgments of you, *Gal.* 6. 4. *Let every man prove his own work*; the work that is wrought by him, of what ſort it is, and ſo the work of Grace, which is by himſelf, or others, thought to be wrought in him.

4. Think not to confirm your Aſſurance by changing modes and ways of Chriſtianity; *Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem ſhall ye worſhip the Father*, John 4. 21. In *this* Mountain; there was their Forefathers Example leading them to Mount *Gerezim*, *&c.* But ye, that is, the *Jews*, plead *Solomon*'s building, and God's bleſſing the Temple at *Jeruſalem*. Some have tried this way of changing forms, and been quieted a little while; but their doubts have returned, and muſt needs, for any help that can be that way gotten. Evidences of Salvation are internal, and ſtanding things abiding.

5*thly*, Slight not any hopeful Evidence, becauſe you yet find ſome doubts. *Paul* bleſſed God, that *with his mind he ſerved the law of Chriſt, though with the fleſh the law of ſin*, Rom. 7. laſt. Aſſurance is always imperfect, and this firſt work is always needful; as I ſhall ſhew, if God will, in the next Step.

6*thly*, Wait always on God by Prayer for information concerning your own eſtate. See *Pſalm* 139. 1, 2, and 23d Verſes. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

MATTH. XIII. 44.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field: The which when a man hath found, he hideth; and for joy thereof, goeth and ſelleth that he hath, and buyeth that field.

THE *ſecond Period*, or degree of a Believer's motion towards his *Perfection*, may be deſcribed by *rejoycing in Chriſt*, as that which is moſt ſignal and remarkable, in Believers of ſome little ſtanding, after they have a-while conflicted with Fears and Doubts, and taken ſome ſolicitous pains to aſſure themſelves, that they are in a ſtate of grace. By this time it is uſual with God to give them peace, and perſuade them of his ſpecial love. Some Sermon or other he imploys on purpoſe to diſperſe their darkneſs: Some Promiſe or other he ſo interprets, and applies to them, as to make it look them in the face, and ſpeak comfort to them. Sometimes it comes in return to ſome earneſt prayer that they have lately made for it: Sometimes, when they are ſadly pondering their doubts, and almoſt overwhelmed with ſorrows. But uſually when they have little expectation of it, then they hear the voice of peace, and receive intimation of the love of God, and this highly rejoyces and chears up their hearts. As our Saviour's words, which I have read, imply. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath.*

By

By the Kingdom of Heaven, I underſtand the Salvation of God in Jeſus Chriſt, the perfection whereof is, that it crowns men with a Kingly, Heavenly, and Eternal Glory. This Salvation our Saviour here compares to hidden Treaſure; becauſe as it is of infinite value and excellency, ſo it is unſeen by men, till their eyes are opened by the Goſpel, and they are brought by Faith to Jeſus Chriſt, and made to believe in him; 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. *In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* Then when a man believes, he finds the Treaſure. *Jeſus Chriſt* is found by faith, *Iſa.* 65. 1. *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Chriſt is the arm of the Lord, and when he is revealed, he is found; and *he that finds him, findeth life*, Prov. 8. 35. and when the Soul has thus found Salvation, his great care is to ſecure it to himſelf; that he may be ſure of it and not fail to obtain it; which I take to be here intimated by *hiding* of the Treaſure when 'tis found. For in ſuch a caſe, a man's way to aſcertain himſelf of the attainment of what he has found, is to make it as ſure as he can from other hands, that he may not miſs of it; and having ſo done, he rejoices in the hope of having it to himſelf, which ſignifies *that joy* whereof I am now ſpeaking, *viz. The joy of a Believer, under perſuaſion, that he is in a ſtate of ſalvation.* The ſame joy is that reported of the *Samaritans*, Acts 8. 8. *There was great joy in that city.* And Verſe the 39th, it's ſaid, *The Eunuch went on his way rejoycing.* And that in Acts 16. 34. *He rejoyced, believing with all his heart.* And Rom. 5. 1, 2. *We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

Some Inſtances of this Joy in Chriſtians, upon their firſt aſſurance of Salvation after their coming to Chriſt by faith, I ſhall now ſhew you. And the firſt Inſtance is,

Inſt. 1. A very thankful remembrance of the means, by which they have been awakened, and perſuaded to return to God. Though many Chriſtians are unable to give a particular account of *the firſt time*, and *means* of their Converſion, yet ordinarily they remember by what means they have been more remarkably ſtirred up, and moved to enquire after God, and ſeek peace with him, and are very thankful to God for it And ſo you ſhall hear them bleſſing God for ſuch or ſuch a Sermon, or ſuch a man's Miniſtry, whereby it pleaſed God to ſet them a-moving toward himſelf; 'O that was a proper word for my caſe. 'I thought the word was choſen, and the Ser-'mon ſtudied on purpoſe for me; it came home 'ſo cloſely to me, diſcovering my ſin, ſhewing 'me what was my confidence, and how I delu-'ded my ſelf in it; what was my danger, and 'how near I was to it. I little thought to have 'been ſo fully met withal, ſo clearly to have 'ſeen my own face in the glaſs of the Law, to 'have returned ſo convinced, ſo affrighted, *&c.* 'I uſed to hear for others, and to obſerve how 'they were met with, and concerned in what 'was ſaid; But now it pleaſed God to give me 'my Portion, and ſend me home with my own 'Burthen; and bleſſed be his Grace, that ſo, and ſo 'ſeaſonably found me out. I thought I had been 'armed ſufficiently, and could have endured the 'force of a Sermon as eaſily as any man in the 'Congregation, and have born up my face undauntedly

'dauntedly againſt all Rebukes and Threatnings, 'but the Word was too ſtrong for me, and brought 'me down —— upon my Knees, and *bleſſed be* 'God that it did ſo; bleſſed be God that prepared 'it, ſo ſharpened it, ſo timed it, and ſo follow-'ed it with powerful motions of his Spirit, that 'I could never acquit my ſelf of it, till I was 'perſwaded to return, and yield my ſelf up to 'God. *Secondly,*

2*dly*, Their thankful acknowledgement of the goodneſs of God to them, in that they died not in their former Eſtate. As *Hezekiah*, when he was recovered of his Sickneſs, and found himſelf well again, wrote a Memorial of the goodneſs of God to him in his Reſtitution, wherein he recorded the danger he had been in, and how near he was to Death, and what a narrow eſcape he had, *Iſaiah* 38. 9. So Chriſtians when once they apprehend themſelves paſſed from Death to Life, are even afraid to think what an Eſtate they were in before, and mightily taken with the Mercy of God that ſuffered them not to periſh in that Condition. 'I was in love with my own 'perverſe way, when I was running headlong 'to Deſtruction: I thought my ſelf ſafe enough 'when I was even in the midſt of all Evil: I 'truſted to my own Works, when I was work-'ing out my Damnation, Prov. 5. 14. *I was al-'moſt in all evil.* I deſpiſed reproof, and heark-'ned not to the voice of my Teachers; and if the 'Lord had then taken me off by Death, I had 'certainly periſhed: O! bleſſed be God, that had 'pity on me, when I had no care of my ſelf; 'and awakened me when I was ſleeping the 'Sleep of Death. Thus *Paul*, *I was a perſecutor, a blaſphemer, and injurious, but I obtained mercy*, &c.

Now

Now to the King eternal, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, 1 Tim. 1. 13. So all the followers of the Lamb the Lord Jeſus are ſaid to ſing the Song of *Moſes*, Rev. 15. 3. *Bleſſing* God that ſuffered them not to dye under *Egyptian* Bondage, or periſh in the *Red-Sea.*

3*dly*, Their readineſs to tell others what God has done for their Souls. Chriſtians are hardly ever ſo communicative of their experiences, as about this Age. As Children, when firſt they get uſe of their Tongues, are moſt apt to talk. Thus Chriſtians, when they have newly got the ſenſe of ſaving love, are often ſaying with *David*, *Come and hear ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul,* Pſalm 66. 16. 'I was periſhing unawares, and he 'ſhewed me my danger, and then I thought I 'muſt needs periſh without remedy. I walked 'up and down trembling like *Cain*, and could 'neither eat nor drink, lye down nor riſe in 'peace. All was black and dark about me. Every 'word of God ſeemed to be againſt me, and the 'Wrath of God was always ready, as I thought, 'to ſwallow me up, till ſuch a Word came, and 'ſuch a Promiſe was ſet home to my heart: And 'them my Fears vaniſhed, and my Soul was quieted, my Mourning turned into Joy, *&c.* Ne'ver was a poor fainting Soul ſo revived: *O taſte 'and ſee, that the Lord is grocious, he belivered my 'ſoul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from 'falling,* Pſalm 116. 8.

4*thly*, Their great contentedneſs under outward Troubles, becauſe God has ſpoken peace to their Souls. Though they be poor (it may be) and low in the World, and meet with many Enemies;

Enemies; though they are reproached by their Neighbours and their old Companions, and ſuffer the diſpleaſure of their Friends, for betaking themſelves to a new courſe of Life; yea, though they are watcht and kept in, and are fain to make hard ſhift to get out to Ordinances, and into Chriſtian Communion, yet all is eaſy to them, and they bear it patiently, becauſe God has manifeſted himſelf to their Souls, and given them good hopes, through Grace, of everlaſting Glory. Now let Friends reject them, Father and Mother forſake them, ſince God has taken them up. Their acquaintance diſown them, but God owns them; the World frowns upon them, but Heaven ſmiles. They are in danger to ſuffer loſs of all, but they have found Chriſt, and won Chriſt, and 'tis *enough*, they rejoyce in their Portion. *Fifthly*,

5*thly*, The ſweet Savour which they find in the Goſpel, and the word of promiſe. Joy ſweetens our Meat and Drink to us, and makes us reliſh what is ſet before us. So Chriſtians in this Eſtate are ſtrangely taken with ſpiritual *Promiſes*, and find a ſweetneſs in them which they never perceived before, ſo that they wonder at themſelves to think how many times they have read, and heard ſuch a Portion of the Word, and never underſtood it, never found any reliſh in it. But now they cry out, O *what a good Word is this! Oh delicacies of our Father's Houſe! What Nouriſhment, what Cordials are in his Evangelical Proviſions! This is bread from Heaven, Angels food indeed — ! What a Table is here ſpread? What a Cup is here filled?* The Word of God is quite another thing to ſuch a Soul from what it was before. *Sixthly*,

6*thly*, Their

6thly, Their affectionate Thoughts of God and Chriſt; as *David* expreſſes himſelf in Pſalm 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplications.* So Chriſtians raiſed up out of their Sorrows, Terrors, and Deſpairs, highly admire and love Jeſus Chriſt, in whom they have now believed, as the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks in his firſt Epiſtle, Chap. 2. Verſe 7. *To you that believe he is precious.* Though they were yet but as new-born Babes. Now let me give you a few Reaſons. *Firſt*,

Reaſ. 1. No marvel that Chriſtians are ſo much rejoiced upon the firſt receit of ſuch Aſſurance, becauſe it is uſually the fruit of much ſtudious Pains and Labour, many Prayers, much waiting, and many ſtrict Examinations of themſelves. That is naturally pleaſant which is hardly attained. *They that ſow in tears, reap in joy*, Pſalm 126. 5. *Secondly*,

Reaſ. 2. It has in it the beginning of Heaven, 1 Pet. 1. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the ſalvation of your ſouls.* Believers now receive the beginning of that Salvation, which is the end of their Faith. *Salvation* is the intended end of Faith, that which Faith is always ſeeking and aiming at, that which Faith ſeeks and waits for, and it is the end of the Faith of Chriſtians, as that in which it ceaſes as believing, and is turned into Viſion. So Faith of Aſſurance is a very joyous thing. *Thirdly*,

Reaſ. 3. They commonly think their doubts and fears now gone for all; they think they ſhall deſpair no more, diſtruſt God no more. As *David*, *Pſalm* 30. 6. ſaid, *I ſhall not be moved.* But this third Reaſon has a miſtake in it, as it ordinarily

rily proves; of which I ſhall ſpeak afterward. *Fourthly*,

Reaſ. 4. God gives this comfort to facilitate his Peoples way to Heaven. If they ſhould live all their days under Fears and Sorrows, yet Heaven would make amends for all. But God will not put them ſo hardly to it. *He will not always contend, leſt the ſpirit fail*, Iſaiah 57. 16. I come now to the Uſes.

Uſe 1. Let none diſlike the way of God as a ſorrowful and uncomfortable way. Chriſtianity has its Nights indeed, but it has alſo its pleaſant Mornings, which makes amends for them. Chriſtians have much labour and ſorrow, but it's recompenced abundantly with reſt and eaſe. They go through an hungry and thirſty Wilderneſs, but have *Manna* to eat, and Water out of the living Rock to drink. They have in fit ſeaſon and proportion, the Cup of Conſolation given them in this Life; and the beſt Wine is reſerved to the laſt, when Chriſt and they ſhall drink it new together in the Kingdom of their Father. As *Matth.* 26. 29. *Secondly*,

Uſe 2. This ſpeaks Encouragement to mourning and trembling Souls, that are labouring after Aſſurance of Love of God. *Heavineſs may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*, Pſalm 30. 5. It is the work of converted Chriſtians to ſettle themſelves in the hope of Salvation, and the uſual way of God, when they have been exerciſed a while in this labour, to give them Peace and Joy in believing. As the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Sufferings and Prayers for the ſcattered Saints in a ſuffering Eſtate, in 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of peace, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make ye perfect*,

perfect, ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh you. So Chriſtians after that you have feared and trembled a while, the Lord will ſtabliſh you in aſſurance of his favour; and that will bring in a Joy far exceeding your preſent Sorrows. Wait therefore in the uſe of means, and hearken that you may hear what God will ſay, *For he will ſpeak peace to his people.* You know not how near your Joy may be at hand, as the Church in the *Canticles*, Chap. 3. Verſe 4. *It was but a little that I paſſed*, &c. *but I found him whom my Soul loveth.*

Uſe 3. This teaches Chriſtians to try the ſoundneſs of their perſwaſion, that they are in a ſtate of Grace. It is and muſt needs be a very rejoycing thing to be well perſwaded of it. If you think your ſelves ſafe for Eternity, and under the favour of God, and yet take no pleaſure in it, it's a plain ſign you deceive your ſelves. And this is doubtleſs the caſe of many that think to go to Heaven when they dye, and yet have no joy of that Opinion, becauſe they have no love to an heavenly Eſtate, no deſire after Communion with God. This their Perſwaſion relieves them againſt ſome fear of Hell, but for the moſt part gives them very little pleaſure of Heaven. But it muſt yet be granted, that Men may have ſome joy of a falſe Perſwaſion that they are in a ſtate of Salvation. Let us therefore enquire into the difference between *Joy of Faith*, and of a *falſe Perſwaſion of Salvation.* Firſt,

1. *Joy of Faith*, and of good Aſſurance, is a *Soul-humbling Joy.* It gives all the Glory to God, and abaſes the Soul in what it is, Iſaiah 29. 19. *The meek ſhall increaſe their joy*, and their joy increaſe their meekneſs.

But

But that of an unſound Perſwaſion is attended with Pride and Self-confidence, Luke 18. 11. *I am not as other men.* He deſpiſed others.

2. It raiſes the heart to Heaven and future Glory, and makes the Soul look earneſtly at more of the glorious preſence of God, as *Moſes* in his Song, Exod. 15. 17, 18. *Thou ſhalt bring them in*, viz. (thy People *Iſrael*) *and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou haſt made for thee to dwell in: in the ſanctuary, O Lord, which thine hands have eſtabliſhed. The Lord ſhall reign for ever and ever.* So *Cant.* 3. 4. *I held him, and would not let him go, till I had brought him into my mothers Houſe*, &c. The Church having re-obtained the ſight of the favour of God in Chriſt, reſolves to keep up to him, till ſhe ſhould come to a joyous beholding of him in Heaven: To which Viſion, that which ſhe now ſees of him, makes her earneſtly to aſpire.

Again, This Joy as it raiſes the deſire towards Heaven, ſo it moderates the Affections to earthly things, as Hoſea 10. 34. *Ye ſuffered with joyfulneſs the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in your ſelves, that you have in heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance.* This aſſurance does not make Chriſtians rejoyce in the loſs of their Goods, but in the hope of better in Heaven. Joy of an unſound Perſwaſion inclines the mind to earthly things, Phil. 3. 28. *Who mind earthly things*; while yet they profeſs to have their hope in the Croſs of Chriſt, but are its Enemies. Yea, this Joy makes the Soul deſire to depart and be with the Lord in Heaven, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*, Luke 2. 29. *Thirdly*,

3. It's active and obediential, and puts Men upon work and ſervice for God: *What ſhall I render*

der unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? Pſalm 116. 12. *I'll walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* As to ſtand before the Lord, is to wait for his order and commands, ſo to walk before him, is to perform and execute them. But Joy of an unſound Perſwaſion takes off from Duty; What need ſo much Work and Duty, ſo muſt ſtrictneſs? *&c.* But this falls in the third Step or Period, which I ſhall now ſpeak to from,

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ROM. VI. 18.

Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs.

THE *Third Period*, or Degree of a Chriſtian's Motion towards his Perfection, is a reſolved ſettling upon a Courſe of Chriſtian Practice, which is intimated in theſe words, *Being made free from Sin*, &c. Freedom from Sin in this place, is to be underſtood of the State of Juſtification, into which Men enter in the very firſt Act of Faith, (that is) in their firſt true Converſion, as appears in Verſe 14, 15. *Ye are not under the law, but under grace, i. e.* not under Condemnation, but juſtified freely by the Grace of God. This he called *freedom from Sin* in the Text, which may be yet further argued thus. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch a freedom from Sin, as requires a ſervice to righteouſneſs, *Verſe* 9. Now freedom by way of Sanctification doth not require ſervice to righteouſneſs, but immediately implies it. 'Tis the ſame thing to be cleanſed from Sin and

to

to be Holy; freed from the inherency of Sin, and engaged in the ſervice or practice of righteouſneſs. It were abſurd to command a Man, becauſe he is no ignorant Man, to be wiſe and knowing; becauſe he is no intemperate Perſon, to be ſober; when the very quality of the Perſon mentioned, and the reaſon of the command, imply the preſence of the thing required. So 'tis not to be imagined that the Apoſtle ſuppoſes the *Romans* free from the indwelling, and the power of Sin, and therefore perſwades them to ſubmit themſelves to the practice of Godlineſs, for this is implied in that freedom. But he ſpeaks of the freedom of *Juſtification*, which ſtrongly calls for Holineſs, and demands Obedience, as Pſal. 130. 4. *There is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* And thus with thankfulneſs to God, he reminds them of the gifts of his Grace, under which being juſtified, they became Servants of Righteouſneſs. By *becoming Servants*, we underſtand a Self-reſignation to the Will of God, in the practice of the duty of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, as Verſe 17. *Ye have obeyed from the heart* (that is willingly) *the form of Doctrine delivered to you.* Neither are theſe *Romans* to be conſidered only as freed from Condemnation, as apprehending themſelves to be ſo. As 'tis evidently the main Subject of the Chapter, Verſe 1. *Shall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound?* Where he condemns the ill uſe that Men might be ſuppoſed at leaſt to make of their Pardon and Juſtification; (that is) to take liberty thereupon to Sin, becauſe if they ſinned never ſo much, they were under Pardon, and the more they ſinned, the greater would be the glory of that Grace that pardoned them. Now no Man can poſſibly thus argue

himſelf into Sin, unleſs he apprehends himſelf to be pardoned, and free from Condemnation. So that the Senſe of the Text is plain, that when Chriſtians do truly apprehend themſelves to be free from Condemnation for Sin, they willingly deliver up themſelves to be Servants of Righteouſneſs. So we have clear ground for this Aſſertion:

Prop. That juſtified Perſons, eſpecially when they apprehend themſelves to be ſo, do heartily apply themſelves to Duty in the practice of Godlineſs, Pſalm 116. 8, 9. *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death; I will walk before the Lord,* that is, *I'll ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him*, as is expreſſed in *Luke* 1. 74, 75. And Pſalm 56. 13. *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, &c. and 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* It plainly argues a propenſion in ſuch Perſons, as are in a ſtate of Grace, and apprehend themſelves to be ſo, to obey the Lord in the perfection of Holineſs. And this is evident in the following Particulars.

1. *Firſt*, They ſtudiouſly endeavour to inform themſelves of the commanding Will of God. Whereas before they were moſtly inquiring after promiſes that might comfort them. Now they earneſtly ſeek to know the Precepts, by which they ought to be directed in the well ordering of their Life. That, as the Apoſtle ſays, *They may prove what is the good and acceptable will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. Now they make it their buſineſs to ask queſtions, concerning the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of matters of Practice, and enquire what

what may be done, and what muſt be done. Thus the *Corinthians* wrote to *Paul* about matters of Practice. Marriage in time of Suffering, 1 *Cor.* 7. 1, 2. And eating of things offered to Idols, *Chapter* 8. Such were the things that they wrote about, that they might clearly underſtand what was the Will of God concerning their practiſe in ſuch things. This alſo is evident in the caſe of the *Centurion*, *Acts* 10. 6, 7. the Angel aſſured him of his acceptance with God, and that he was in a ſtate of Salvation; but tells him a way to know his Duty, what he ought to do. And preſently he obſerves the direction, and ſends for *Peter*; carnal Reaſon would have replied, If I be accepted with God, then my Sins are pardoned, and I am ſafe; what need I more? but *immediately* ſays he, Verſe 33. *I ſent for thee*, &c. So 'tis manifeſt that Perſons in the ſtate of Grace, and perceiving themſelves ſo, do very much intend the knowledge of their Duty.

2. *Secondly*, They very gladly accept and comply with the Will of God, when once they have diſcovered it. They have in them a new Nature, the Law written in their hearts, which makes them with pleaſure to receive information of their Duty from the Word, becauſe it agrees with what they have through Grace an internal Diſpoſition to; 1 Theſſ. 4. 1. *We beſeech you brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus, that as ye have received of us, how you ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more.* Ye received the Word, is often uſed for an affectionate Reception; as a Man receives him whom he kindly entertains, and makes much of him. Acts 16. 33. *And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed their ſtripes, and was baptized.*

And John 14. 3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my ſelf.*

The Commands of God are welcome to a Man in the ſtate of Grace; eſpecially when he once comes to underſtand himſelf to be ſo. 'Tis but a *Meioſis* that the Apoſtle uſes in the 1 John 5. 2. *His commands are not grievous*, that is, they are very pleaſant. As Heb. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous*, that is, he is highly Righteous. Before, they were willing to know the Law, but nothing was comfortable to them but the Goſpel; the word of promiſe to ſtay them from deſpair. But now they rejoyce to know their Duty, and what will pleaſe him that has ſhewed mercy on them. See a notable inſtance of this in Acts 15. 31. *They rejoyced greatly for the conſolation*; in the Margin 'tis *Exhortation*, declaring matter of Duty. So the *Jews* rejoyced for that they underſtood the firſt words of the Law, *Neh.* 8. 12.

3. *Thirdly*, They put themſelves upon ſpeedy and preſent performance of Duty as ſoon as they know it. They do not only conſent to the Law, and approve of what it requires, and ſo reſolve upon it for time to come; but according to their Ability they apply themſelves to a preſent performance of it. As *David, I made haſte and delayed not*, *Pſalm* 119. 60. This ſome underſtand by *the firſt love*, Rev. 2. 4. *Thou haſt loſt thy firſt love*, that is, thou art not ſo zealous in thy Work and Duty as formerly. The Apoſtle's Argument implies this, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know.*— The words evidently preſume, That if Men know their acceptance, they will addict, and give up themſelves to Duty. In Scripture-Language

Language the ſame word ſignifies *Conſolation* and *Exhortation*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.* The Comfort that Chriſtians receive from the *Promiſe*, preſently exhorts and perſwades them to the Duty which they owe to the *Command.* So they ſet up Duty of Religion in Families, and appoint themſelves times of Prayer in ſecret; take all opportunities to hear the Word, and provide for the ſtrict Obſervation of the Sabbath, *&c.*

4. *Fourthly*, They are much pleaſed with a Courſe of Chriſtian Duty, when once they are got into it. It's no burden but a pleaſure to them, as *David* ſaies in Pſalm 119. 14. *I have rejoyced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches.* Their Joy in Chriſt excites them to Obedience, as was ſaid before, and their Obedience advances their Joy, Pſalm 37. 23. *He delighteth in the way.* Thus Chriſtians find the ways of Wiſdom to be ways of Peace, and her Paths, Paths of pleaſantneſs.

5. *Fifthly*, They are very deſirous to acquaint themſelves with godly Perſons, by whoſe converſe they way be holpen on in the way of Holineſs. No ſooner was *Paul* after his Converſion comforted, and aſſured of God, that he was reconciled to him, and a choſen Veſſel; but preſently, *He aſſayed to joyn himſelf to the Diſciples*, Acts 9. 26. even while they were yet afraid of him. He knew very well, that as he had Abilities whereby he might be of uſe to them, ſo by walking with the wiſe, himſelf might become wiſe, *Prov.* 15. 20. Therefore *David* ſpeaks of *Evil Company* in Pſalm 119. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

6. *Sixthly*, They are impatient of diverſion from the way of Duty, or Impediments in it. If any thing falls out that hinders them from a good Exerciſe in the ſeaſon of it, it's a Sorrow and Affliction to them. When they are taken off from hearing a Sermon, or with-held from an Aſſembly for Prayer, they bear it as a great Affliction, as *David* bemoaned himſelf when he was with-held from the Tabernacle and the Altar, Pſalm 42. 1. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God.* And Pſalm 84. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hoſts! my Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* This made it ſo great a wo to *David* to dwell in *Meſech*, &c. or that he was kept in a wandring Condition, like the Inhabitants of *Arabia Deſerta*, with them, (that is) wandering as they do, and ſo kept off religious attendance on the Lord. So among thoſe whoſe manner of Life was an impediment to him in his purpoſe and deſign to walk with God; they were quarrelſome and contentious, and he could have no peace nor reſt with them, unleſs he would go with them, and do as they did, Pſalm 120. 5. *Wo is me, that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.* Now we ſee that this is eminent in Perſons coming to a comfortable perſwaſion of their Intereſt in Chriſt, they are impatient of any hindrance in Chriſtian Duty; they much intend the practice of Godlineſs and Chriſtian Duty. But there are ſome weakneſſes attending this their intention of Duty, eſpecially at this Age, which here we muſt take ſome notice of.

1. Their

1. Their Obedience at the firſt ſtands moſt in outward Actions. The firſt care of a Chriſtian about his Obedience, is to rectify his life, and amend his ways. He has firſt notice of his outward actual Sin, before he comes to be ſo much aware of his indwelling Corruption; and ſo he doth not yet effectually conſider, no nor underſtand what work he has to do within himſelf: Like unskilful Menders of the Highways, where they find a Slough or Quick-ſand, they lay a little Gravel on the top, and that holds awhile, and then ſinks in; but wiſer Men dig to the bottom, and ſcour the Ditches, to drain away the water, and ſo clear the way. Every converted man knows the Doctrine of Original Sin, in ſome degree; but men little think what the ſin and wickedneſs of their Nature is, when firſt they ſet out Heavenward, till ſome experience of themſelves has ſhewed them what falſe and treacherous, proud and ſelfiſh, yea, ſenſual and brutiſh hearts they have within them; and therefore at firſt if they can reform their Lives, and outward Actions, they think they have done their buſineſs, and ſo fall directly upon that the *Corinthians* at firſt were careful and inquiſitive about ontward Actions and Eſtates, Marriage and Celibacy, (or ſingle Life) 1 *Cor.* 7. 1. eating things offered to Idols, whether they might touch them or no, *Chap.* 8. 1. Theſe were their work and enquiry, not as yet ſo much minding their Pride, which made them contentious and ſchiſmatical; and therefore the Apoſtle heard not of that immediately from themſelves, as of the other matters; but by thoſe of the houſe of *Chloe*, which ſome take to have been a Town or Village, or Family, at ſome diſtance from *Corinth*, which had obſerved it in

them, 1 *Cor.* 1. 11. *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the houſe of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.* Secondly,

2. They are uſually very much led by the example of good men, as to the manner and method of Chriſtian practice, without a due enquiry after the Scripture-grounds for it. Though they are heartily deſirous to know the Will of God as before, yet in many things they contentedly fall into the ſame Road wherein Chriſtians of their time walk, without examining the Rule, as thinking that certainly ſuch good men muſt needs be right. Much is ſaid about the way to advance *Uniformity*, but Experience ſhews that Cuſtom and Example is moſtly inducing to Uniformity. Well-diſpoſed men commonly aſſociate themſelves to thoſe whom they look upon as Diſciples of Chriſt, and do as they do, without looking any further. Hence they are ſubject to be puzled by men of unſound Opinions, that object againſt their Chriſtian practice, becauſe they have little but example to plead for it. And here young Converts often fail; not that they follow others in that that is good, (for that argues humility, and a good eſteem of them that fear God) but that they obſerve not the Apoſtle's Rule, which teaches to conſider how thoſe others follow Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Chriſt.* Thirdly,

3. They do many times unduly divide themſelves between Duties of Religion, and their particular Callings. They are at firſt ſo eager to hear Sermons, and join with others in Prayer and Conference, and ſuch Chriſtian Exerciſes, that they take not a fitting Conſideration of what God

God requires of them in their particular ſtations: So their Families ſuffer, if they have Families, or their Parents or Maſters are injured by their unſeaſonable attendance on Exerciſes of Chriſtianity, while they forget the Ordinance of God, that in ſix days we ſhould do all our work, all that is incumbent on us, as neceſſary to be done: Yea, this way ſometimes, young Profeſſors take themſelves off from their buſineſs, and unfit themſelves for it, and ſometimes diſorder their minds, and weaken their very natural Faculties, by an irregular Intention. I ſay, *by an irregular Intention* upon ſpiritual things; and this turns much to the diſparagement of Religion, among them that have a mind to take up all Exceptions againſt it that they can meet with; as if Religion put People beſides themſelves. Thus 'tis many times with Chriſtians at firſt ſetting out, but afterward we find them, and they find themſelves ſlow enough, and lamentably backward to the beſt Exerciſes. *Fourthly,*

4thly, The newneſs of the way of Chriſtianity to them, is very much a cauſe of their pleaſure in it. They take up Duty in obedience to God, and love it for its goodneſs; and ſo far Grace acts them, and works in them: But beſides, there is a natural pleaſure which they take in it, as a *new courſe of life*, to which they have not been uſed: And this ſerves for a while, to hold them up to a great deal of forwardneſs and activity, which afterwards wears off with its cauſe, and leaves but ſo much activity behind, as there is Grace in the Soul to produce and maintain it. This ſometimes makes Chriſtians ſeem to others to have been but Hypocrites in their former diligence in Chriſtianity, becauſe they are now

now more remiſs; and commonly themſelves at ſome time or other, are brought to ſuſpect that they have no ſaving Grace in them at all, becauſe as they think they are grown worſe; whereas indeed there is but an accidental Motive fallen off, which makes the Motion ſlower than it was, though the true and proper Principle remains. As if a Man pulls a Clock or Jack by the Line, when 'tis going, it goes apace; but when he withdraws his hand, it goes more ſlowly, and yet it goes as faſt as the proper weight made it go before, and is not grown a worſe Clock or Jack, but only the Hand-help is withdrawn. This *newneſs* is it which cauſes that *firſt love* which the *Epheſians* are blamed for leaving, *Rev.*2.4. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.* Now this ſome take to be the zeal and forwardneſs of Chriſtianity, for the newneſs of it: But ſome may object and ſay,

Object. This may ſeem to be no fault in the *Epheſians*, and not reprovable in them; 'tis no fault to leave it. I anſwer:

Anſw. 'Tis Sin in others as in them, when we do not love Duty ſtill in as high degree for Chriſt's ſake, when ſuch accidental motions fall off, as when they are at the higheſt, as a Schoolboy ſhould love his Book when 'tis old, as when it was freſh and new: ſo perhaps new Converts loved Chriſtianity better at firſt than afterward, but it's their fault.

Thus far have I been ſpeaking concerning Chriſtians that are hopefully and comfortably in a ſtate of ſalvation. I now proceed to the reaſon of this, why Chriſtians that are comfortably aſ-

ſured

ſured of their ſafe eſtate, do give up themſelves to the practice of godlineſs, why they are ſo active and forward in the Duties of Religion. Firſt,

1 *R.* Chriſtians comfortably aſſured of their Juſtification, or Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, do therefore heartily give up themſelves to the ſervice of Righteouſneſs, becauſe they love God, and this is the proper exerciſe of their love. The grace of love to God is implanted in their Souls in their firſt Converſion, when as yet they have no clear aſſurance of their ſalvation; but when they come to a comfortable perſwaſion that they are in a ſtate of grace, they love God, becauſe he has firſt loved them; ſee *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice.* And in 1 *Joh.* 4. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* Secondly,

2 *R.* The trouble and torments which their Sin has brought upon them, makes them gladly betake themſelves to a courſe of Holineſs, in hope to be at eaſe: *Pſal.* 25. 12, 13. *What man is he that feareth the Lord? him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chuſe. His ſoul ſhall dwell at eaſe,* &c. Obedience ſeems to fleſh and blood a very hard and weariſom courſe of life, and therefore it pleaſes God ſo to order it, that men ſhould return to him, wearied with the troubles and vexatious fears and deſpairs which attend on Sin, that they may be the more willing to give up themſelves to Holineſs and Obedience.

3 *R. Thirdly,* They know it is the way to their compleat happineſs. Tho Heaven be not merited by Holineſs, yet 'tis not to be obtained without it;

it; as *Heb.* 12. 14. *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* It's a uſual ſaying of Divines, That Holineſs does not merit Heaven, but it is the way to it; and this Chriſtians underſtanding, are more willing and forward in the practice of Holineſs. I come now to the *Uſes.*

Uſe 1. This confutes the uſual Objection againſt the Doctrine of Aſſurance of Salvation, that it leads to the neglect of duty; for, ſay they that deny Aſſurance attainable, If once men be perſuaded that they are in a ſtate of Salvation, and ſhall be ſaved, they will preſently think it needleſs to take more pains about their Salvation. But we have ſeen, that a comfortable perſuaſion of their being in a ſafe Eſtate, is an effectual argument to duty; and Chriſtians never ſet ſo couragiouſly and reſolvedly upon the practice of Godlineſs, as when they have attained a good aſſurance of their Salvation.

Uſe 2. This Doctrine which I have been propounding to you, may convince men of their Self-deceit, who neglect duty, and take liberty to ſin, becauſe they hope to be ſaved. It's a falſe Opinion of an intereſt in God, that ſtands with the neglect of his Commands; eſpecially when 'tis the ground and argument of that neglect. *I am God all-ſufficient, walk before me, and be perfect, Gen.* 15. So God indents with them whom he receives for his people, and they conſent with him. You that live beſide the known Rules of Chriſtianity, without any ſtated worſhip of God in your Families, without the Exerciſe of Secret Prayer, and meditations in your Chambers, and Cloſets; you that ordinarily profane the Sabbath,

and

and lay it common to your worldly Uſes; that are ordinarily guilty of ſwearing, lying, defrauding and injuring your Neighbours; that are intemperate in eating and drinking, *&c.* and you that ſo clearly know your ſin, that you uſe your art and skill to hide it from the eyes of men: Do you not know, that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt ſuch unrighteouſneſs of men? Yea, but poſſibly ſome may ſay, We have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, and are juſtified through his Blood, and hope to be ſaved, as well as thoſe that live the ſtricteſt lives. Certainly your hopes deceive you, and you are in a periſhing eſtate. For the knowledge of being in a ſtate of Grace, will make them apply themſelves to the practice of Godlineſs. — *being made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs.* Such is the caſe of thoſe that encourage themſelves in the Examples of *Noah*, and *David*, Fore-fathers, or of men reputed godly.

Uſe 3. It helps much to confirm Chriſtians in their hopes of Salvation, who find themſelves moved and excited to Obedience; 'tis a ſign your Perſuaſion is rightly grounded.

And thus much for this third Step of Converts toward their Salvation; A reſolved ſetling upon a courſe of Chriſtian Practice.

2 COR. V. 1.

Having therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

THE *fourth Period*, ſpace, or interval of a Chriſtian's motion towards Perfection that I ſhall ſpeak of, is a laborious endeavour to mortify in-dwelling Sin; which is intimated in theſe words, as here laid in an Exhortation from Chapter the Sixth. When a Chriſtian under perſuaſions that he is in a ſtate of Grace, has for ſome time made it his buſineſs to reform and rectify his life; though he meets with no ſmall obſtacles without, yet he manifeſtly perceives at length, that the greateſt difficulty of his work ariſes from the evil that is within him; *that other law*, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks ſo fully, *Rom.* 7. 23. *But I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind*; and thereupon proceeds to the great Deſign, of mortifying his inherent Luſts and Corruptions. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves*, &c.

The Apoſtle *Paul* here repreſents himſelf, and the *Corinthians*.

1. *Firſt*, As in a ſtate of Grace and Salvation: Having the Promiſes, in which God undertakes to be their Father, and takes them for his Children.

2*dly*, As being comfortably perſuaded that they were in that happy eſtate.

3*dly*, As

3*dly*, As intending to perfect holineſs: That is, to perform the Will of God in a courſe of obedience; *Perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* And in order to this, he ſtirs up himſelf and them, to a ſtrenuous and diligent endeavour, to purge out their yet remaining and indwelling Sin. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit.* And hence we have this Doctrinal Obſervation.

Doctr. That Chriſtians heartily intending obedience to God in their Lives, are thereupon effectually diſpoſed to mortify Sin dwelling in their Souls, *Heb.* 21. 1. *Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and run with patience*, &c. They that are heartily intended to run the race of duty, are thenceforth put upon it to caſt off the weight and fetters of inherent Sin: Such is *Paul*'s report of his own Example, in the 1 *Cor.* 9. 26. *I ſo run, not as uncertain* (that is) that I may certainly obtain: There is his intention of obedience: And that he may ſo obey, he mortifies the body of Sin. *I keep under my body, and bring it under ſubjection.* Now that a man does indeed intend the mortifying of his Sin, that is within him, will appear, if we conſider theſe Evidences following: *Firſt*,

Evid. 1. Such Chriſtians they are full of ſorrowful complaints of the evil and naughtineſs of their hearts; they would go forward in a way of holineſs, but being hindred by evil Inclinations, and Indiſpoſitions to duty, they ſadly bewail the unhappy temper of their Souls; which plainly argues a great deſire and inclination to a better and more purified Eſtate. Men that are always

always complaining of the evil posture of things Political, State-matters, Maleadministrations, and Mis-governments, are usually looked upon as studying Innovations. So here, The man that is generally querulous against the Corruptions of his own heart, is certainly to be accounted a man aiming at the purging them out, and endeavouring a thorough Reformation within his own Territories. Thus *Paul*, O *wretched man that I am!* Rom. 7. 24. Earnest complaints against Persons and Parties in a Nation, are plain indications of a desire and intention to expel them, if it may be, and drive them out. Christians! What is your Errand to God, when you make your secret Applications to him? is it, beside other things of like importance, very much to give in Accusations against your proud Hearts, your sensual Hearts? your covetous, worldly, hypocritical Hearts, This is a great sign you are endeavouring the mortification of your Pride, Sensuality, Covetousness, and Hypocrisy. Christians at first mostly confess their *actual sins*, especially which lay upon their Consciences; but after some progress made in Christianity, and some essays to reform their Lives, they come in with new complaints against themselves, for the Sin that is *within them*, that gives rise and egress to all their actual Sins.

2*dly*, *Such persons are utterly unsatisfied with all their former humiliations for sin, as finding themselves worse, and more desperately wicked than ever they thought they were*; all the Sorrows that ever they have had for Sin, seem nothing in proportion to that vileness and wickedness which they observe in their hearts, and therefore their common complaint is of a hard heart, a stony heart, &c. Now this is mani-

manifeſtly an aſſay to mortify their Sin, to drown and choak it (as I may ſay). In godly ſorrow, an indeavour (in the language of the Prophet) to *waſh the heart from wickedneſs*, Jer. 4. 14. as the words may be expounded by *James* 4. 8, 9. *Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded.* Though ſorrow and mourning do nothing to the waſhing away the guilt of Sin, yet it doth much to the removal of the filth of it: Though it has no validity to ſatisfaction for ſin, yet it has much efficacy to purification of the Soul from it.

3. *They are always inquiſitive after means and directions to the bettering of their hearts.* What may I do (ſays one) to get an humble heart, an heavenly mind? Inquiring how to ſuppreſs evil Thoughts, and keep them out; to ſubdue unruly affections, and reſiſt ſinful Deſires. As before they were much in asking what is the will of God, that they might do it; ſo they are now in ſeeking how they may withſtand and overcome their own Wills which they find rebelling againſt the known Command of God. As Diſeaſed Perſons are always asking, when they meet with thoſe that are skilful, what is good againſt a Conſumption, a Dropſie, the Scurvy, *&c.* ſo Chriſtians heartily intending holineſs and mortification of their Sins, are much diſpoſed to Queſtions (though not in the *Jewiſh* ſenſe) about purifying: Queſtions about healing of Soul-diſeaſes, and purging out of evil Humours. That Word, that Sermon, is moſt acceptable to ſuch a Soul, which gives moſt proper Directions, and preſcribes moſt hopeful Remedies againſt evil and ſinful Inclinations, and gives him moſt aſſiſtance againſt himſelf, as he is corrupt and ſinful. He

is not ſo much taken with a fine notion, or an ingenious gloſs upon a Text, or a witty Interpretation, as a ſolid direction againſt the evil of indwelling Sin.

4*thly*, *They are always calling for the help of the ſpirit againſt their ſins, as finding themſelves unable to deſtroy and mortify them.* Who ſhall deliver me, (that is to ſay) wilt not thou, O God? as *Pſalm* 60. 9, 10. At firſt newly converted Souls are all for the comforting operation of the Spirit; but now for his Soul-ſanctifying Work, that they may *through the ſpirit mortify the deeds of the body*, Rom. 8. 13. and as *David* requeſts in *Pſalm* 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God.*

5thly, *They are altogether uncontented with the good apprehenſions that others profeſs to have of them.* Yea rather diſcontented at them, becauſe they know ſo much evil by themſelves which others are not aware of. So though their Brethren juſtify them, they condemn themſelves, and have it uſuall in a readineſs to anſwer, Oh, if theſe men that ſeem to have ſuch hopeful thoughts of me did but know the vile workings of my wicked heart, they would never endure me. They judge of me as they think, but little think what I know by my ſelf. *The heart*, as *Solomon* ſays, *knows its own grief.* The Soul that's burthened with ſinful Luſts, and labouring againſt them, cannot believe the Caſe of any others to be ſo bad as his. As no man thinks his Neighbour's trouble, though of the ſame kind, ſo grievous as his own. This high diſlike and loathing of a man's own Sin, when it lies quite out of ſight of other men, is a great evidence that the work of Mortification is ſet on foot, and proceeding in the Soul; for *God giveth grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. and as Grace is coming

ing in, Sin is going out. And thus have I endeavoured to ſhew you thoſe Evidences that appear in Chriſtians that are heartily intending and endeavouring the mortifying of inherent Sin. But now a little to ſpeak to the conſequence which the endeavour of mortification has to the ſincere practice of Holineſs; or the Reaſons why Chriſtians intending an holy Life, are thereupon diſpoſed to mortify indwelling Sin.

R. 1. *A ſincere intention of obedience gives a man notice of the ſin within him.* By a ſincere endeavour to reform his Life, a Chriſtian comes to diſcover Sin that is within himſelf. As 'tis ſaid of *Ephraim*, Hoſ. 7. 1. *When I would have healed Iſrael, then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered*; and Rom. 7. 23. *I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind.* Newly converted Chriſtians, till they have tried a-while what they can do in practice of Godlineſs, little think what proud, ſtubborn, earthly and hypocritical hearts they have within them; little think what work they have to do in their own Souls. But by that time they have applied themſelves a-while to it, they find ſuch a backwardneſs to duty, as they could not have imagined, and ſuch an aptneſs to receive Temptations and Sin, without temptation, as they did not think themſelves guilty of; their often relapſes, and breaking of Reſolutions, ſheweth them the falſhood and treachery of their hearts, which they were not formerly aware of; and now they ſee that they have a great work of reformation to do as well within as without; as if a man reform his Family, he ſhall find not only ill Companions without, but ſome of his own Children againſt it.

2dly, *Internal Sin once diſcovered, appears more evil and hateful to a Chriſtian, than his outward ſinful Actions.* It is that which the Apoſtle calls *exceeding ſinful Sin*, as *Rom.* 7. 13. Outward Acts of Sin derive all their Evil from the vicious Inclinations, and evil Intentions of the Soul: The more there is of Pride, Wilfulneſs and Stubborneſs of the Heart in any Sin, the worſe and more hateful it is. *If we ſin wilfully*, Hebr. 10. 26. *after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin.* And *the ſoul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, ſhall be cut off*, Numb. 15. 30. So that now a Chriſtian ſees that he has cauſe and need to labour more to mortify his internal Corruption, than to rectify his outward Actions, that being the greateſt part of his work.

3dly, *Outward Reformation can never be throughly carried on, without reforming the heart.* All the practice of Chriſtianity that we can attain to in our outward Actions, while Sin is unmortified in the heart, is but forced and violent, and ſuch as will not hold. Weeds, you know, that are cut off above the ground, will grow again, you muſt pluck them up by the roots if you would clear the ground of them; therefore the *Apoſtle* bleſſes God for the *Romans*, that they *had obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them*, Rom. 7. 13. Cleanſing the heart, is of neceſſity to waſhing the hands in innocency, *Pſal.* 73. 13. till they come to this, Chriſtians do but intend and aſſay to rectify their Lives, never do it to purpoſe. But

4thly, *The motion of a Chriſtian towards God, is in proſecution of communion with him, which is hindred by indwelling Sin; Iniquities ſeparate.* If a Chriſtian would walk with God, he muſt cleanſe his heart, or he can have no intimacy with him.

This

This Duty of Self-cleanſing, is propounded in the Text to this very end, that we may attain the happineſs of God's gracious preſence, that he may dwell and walk with us, as in *Chap.* 6. 16, 17. *I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* Where *God* walks with a man, he dwells within him; and that cannot be without an ejection of Sin. The Apoſtle *James* requiring men to draw nigh to God, promiſes that he will draw nigh to them, preſently commands them to *purify their hearts*, Jam. 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, and purify your hearts.*

5thly, *Mortificatson of Sin, is the proper effect of a ſincere Obedience.* Every gracious action adds ſomething to the habit or principle of grace in the Soul, ſo much it doth to the weakning of the contrary corruption. To perform the work of a godly man, is the way to become more godly. *The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright*, Prov. 10. 29. And *by holding on his way, he grows ſtronger and ſtronger*, Job 17. 9. Now the ſtronger a man is in grace, the weaker ſin is in him; contrary qualities deſtroy one another, as they increaſe; Grace, by doing its own work, undoes its Adverſary. I now proceed to the *Uſes.*

1 Uſe. *The firſt Uſe is for comfort to ſincere Chriſtians againſt all the activity of men to hinder them in their ſpiritual work and buſineſs.* A main part of a Chriſtian's work lies where men can give it no impediment, nor ſo much as ſee what is done; it lies within doors, where no other perſon can force an entry. It was the great endeavour of the *Jews* enemies to hinder their work of build-

ing the Temple, and then of the wall at *Jeruſalem*, Neh.4.11. *And our adverſaries ſaid, They ſhall not know, neither ſee, till we come in the midſt among them, and ſlay them, and cauſe the work to ceaſe.* So 'tis the deſign of Satan and his Followers to hinder the work of Chriſtianity; but againſt this part of a Chriſtian's work they can do nothing. He may throw down and demoliſh the works of Satan, and fortify himſelf inwardly againſt temptations and ſeducements, and none can hinder him or obſerve him; all external oppoſition ſerves to carry on this work, to make Chriſtians more holy within, more heavenly-minded, more zealous for God, and indifferent to the world. So they that would hinder you from the outward part of your Duty, will further you in that which is your great and main work, purging out malice and envy, and wrath and bitterneſs againſt them; and for all that ever they can do, you may be ſtrengthning your ſelves in your love to God, lowering your ſelves in humility, bowing your ſouls to patience, and perſwading your hearts to love them that uſe you moſt unkindly and injuriouſly: while men are acting their enmity againſt you, you may be confirming your love to them, which will be no ſmall advantage to you; *Againſt theſe there is no law*, Gal. 5.22.

2*d* Uſe. *The ſecond Uſe ſhews the unſoundneſs of their Religion who reſt in external Reformation.* Chriſtians indeed begin there, but they cannot reſt there, nor ſuffice themſelves with it. It's that which our Saviour charges on the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, that they made clean the outſide only. You are temperate, and abſtain from Exceſſes; juſt and honeſt in your dealings; you worſhip God

God in publick, and in Families as others: But what do you within doors? Thirdly,

3*d* Uſe. *It ſhews how far they are from true Chriſtianity, that are not careful ſo much as to rectify the courſe of their Lives*; who make not clean the outſide, that are not aſhamed to appear outwardly Ungodly, Atheiſtical, Voluptuous, Intemperate. Fourthly,

4*th* Uſe. The *Fourth Uſe* is, to perſwade Chriſtians to the mortification of Sin.

1. *Reſolvedly deny the motions of Sin, when firſt you obſerve them.* As *Aſaph*, when he found his heart about to ſpeak bad language againſt God, *Pſal.* 73. 15. preſently recollects his thoughts, and ſays, *If I ſpeak ſo, I ſhall offend againſt the generation of thy children.*

2dly, *When you are overtaken in any ſignal act of Sin, take an early opportunity to humble your ſelves for it*: So what Sin gains by your Fall, it will loſe, and ſomewhat more by your Humiliation.

3dly, *In all your reſiſtances to Sin, look up to Heaven for help.* As the Apoſtle ſays, 1 *Pet.* 5.3. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith.*

4thly, *Interest all your Croſſes and Afflictions into Rebukes for Sin*, that you may ſet your hearts againſt it.

5thly, *Aim ſtill at perfection of Holineſs.* As in the Text, *Perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* Keep up an awful fear of God. And thus much for the fourth Period of a Chriſtian's motion towards Perfection, A laborious endeavour to mortify indwelling Sin.

ROM. VII. 24.

O wretched man that I am!

THE *Fifth Step or Period of a Convert's motion toward Perfection*, that I ſhall treat of, is the Soul's *Conflict* with Diſcouraging-troubles ariſing from the ſenſe of indwelling Sin; which as 'tis the main Subject of the latter part of this Chapter, ſo is moſt emphatically expreſt in theſe words, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* or, as 'tis in the Margin, *from this body of death.*

I confeſs I cannot well ſay how long *Paul* had been converted when he wrote this Epiſtle, the time of his writing it being uncertain; but 'tis certainly evident firſt,

1. That *he ſpeaks of himſelf as a converted Perſon*, and in the ſtate of Grace, renewed and ſanctified in ſome good degree; his Will being habitually determined againſt the evil which he did, and to the good which he did not, as *verſes* 15, 16. and *verſes* 18, 19. He ſpeaks of himſelf, of his *inner man, delighting in the law of God*, verſe 22. which is the very practice of a godly man, as *David* ſpeaks in *Pſal.* 40. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.* The Law is always grievous to a wicked man; though he may like well of ſome Duties required by it, yet the Law it ſelf is a burden to him, which he is not willing to bear, *&c.* All this that he profeſſes of himſelf, (to wit) that he had ſuch a will to good againſt evil, and delighting in the Law, was highly

highly good, and that for which he is thankful, verſe 25. *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* But he utterly denies any good to dwell in him as carnal, verſe 18. *For I know that in me (that is in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing.* So that if he had now been altogether fleſhly and carnal, thus much good could not have been in him, nor any at all.

2dly, *That he ſpeaks of himſelf as labouring to do the Will of God in a courſe of Obedience.* He did ſome good, and intended and was deſirous to do all the reſt, even that he did not; and though he did many evil actions, yet his intention and endeavour was againſt them all, which is manifeſtly the caſe of a man applying himſelf to holineſs of life.

3dly, *That in his endeavouring thus to obey God in all his Actions, he found a ſtrong and vigorous Inclination in his heart to Sin, and againſt Holineſs.* As appears, verſe 21. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* And ver. 23. *I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind.*

4thly, *That upon this diſcovery of ſo much wickedneſs within him, he turned his hearty endeavours againſt it.* As appears by theſe words, *verſe* 23. Rebelling, Warring, leading Captive. In his mind he had (as before) entertained the Law of God, and in obedience thereto he made reſolute Decrees againſt his contrary Inclinations: But they rebelled; he fought againſt them, and they againſt him; for a War cannot be without fighting on both ſides. And when he ſinned at any time, he was carried Captive by his indwelling Sin, which plainly argues he made reſiſtance againſt it; for they are Adverſaries one to another, that carry one another Captive.

5thly,

5thly, *That in this War againſt his evil Inclinations, he found himſelf too weak of himſelf to obtain the Victory*, and therefore cries out as a diſtreſſed man in theſe words, *O wretched man that I am!* No man will ſo bewail his caſe, that finds it in the power of his hand to keep himſelf, *O wretched man that I am!* it's the ſame word that's tranſlated *Miſery*, Rom. 3. 16. *Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways.* And Jam. 5. 1. *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you*; O miſerable man I—! It's made of two *Greek* words, which ſignify Suffering and Lamentation; that is to ſay, I am a lamentable Sufferer. Hence we obſerve this Doctrine:

Doctr. *That Chriſtians heartily endeavouring and labouring againſt Indwelling Sin, are ſubject to much diſcouraging and afflicting trouble about it.* O wretched man that I am! The very Phraſes of *mortifying the members of the body of Sin*, Coloſſ. 3. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication*, &c. *Crucifying the Fleſh*, imply much pain and anguiſh; killing and crucifying are painful things.

Object. Yea, *you will ſay*, to them that are killed; now that is Sin, not the man that kills it. I anſwer:

Anſw. Sin in a man is ſo near to him, and has ſuch an union with him, that it is not unfitly called himſelf. And ſo the man that mortifies Sin, as he is ſpiritually renewed, mortifies himſelf as he is ſinful and unſanctified; therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaking to the *Coloſſians*, bids them *mortify their members*; that is to ſay, your hands, your feet, your eyes, which

which is the very language of our Saviour, *If thine eye offend, pluck it out*, Mat. 5. 29. And that of *David*, Pſal. 38. 4, 5. is moſt plainly and naturally reſolved into this ſenſe, *Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* He was engaged, as every good man is, in a Combat againſt Sin, and the work too hard for him, and his Sin a burden too heavy, and that diſtreſſed him.

Troubles of Chriſtians about Indwelling Sin.

1. *The firſt Trouble is, That it ſeems to increaſe and grow upon them.* It's a very grievous thing to be conflicting with a growing Adverſary, as *David* ſays, Pſal. 3. 1. *Lord, how are they increaſed that trouble me!* A great diſcouragement and heart-killing thing to a Chriſtian ſtriving againſt Sin, when he apprehends it more and more abounding in him. When the Body of Sin appears in him like the *Hydra*, of which the Poets give us their Fictions of a Serpent of Fifty Heads, whereof when one was cut off, two more preſently grew up in the ſtead of it; what hope of overcoming ſuch an Adverſary! and the unlikelineſs of the Victory, muſt needs be a ſore trouble to the Combatant. Thus *Paul* complains that he was *ſold under Sin*, verſe 14. as a Captive or a Slave that is ſold in the Market by him that has him in his power to do what he will with him, as 2 *Tim.* 2. ult. *Taken captive by Satan at his will.* He that's ſold, is more hopeleſs than he that is but newly taken. Alas! ſays the Soul, I am at that paſs now, that one ſight of a tempting Object, one word, one thought will hurry away my Soul into ſinful deſires, and reaching after forbidden things, whcih

which awhile ago were abominable to me, and I thought all the Art of Hell could never reconcile me to them; ſure I am much worſe than ever, *O wretched man that I am!* Beſides this, growth of Sin appears, in a woful backwardneſs and indiſpoſition to Duties of Holineſs, to which the Soul was much inclined heretofore. Time was when I found no hindrance to Duty but worldly buſineſs, or the prohibition of Superiors, or the Scorns of Neighbours, *&c.* And if I could but get time from my Calling, and leave of my Friends, and liberty of my Superiors, I eaſily broke through other diſcouragements, and found nothing to ſtay me; but now when I have leiſure enough, and leave enough to wait on God in Duties, my heart ſtands off from them, I am fain to force and drive my ſelf to them, and many times cannot do ſo much; certainly Sin is encreaſing and growing in me, againſt all my Prayers, Reſolutions and Endeavours to forſake it.

2dly, *They very much ſuſpect themſelves to be altogether graceleſs and unrenewed.* They ſee ſo much Sin in themſelves, and that ſo hateful and abominable, that they can hardly think it poſſible it ſhould ſtand with Grace. It's true the Apoſtle *Paul* could in this caſe diſtinguiſh between himſelf abſolutely conſidered, and himſelf in his fleſh or fleſhly part; and therefore when he was ſaying, *In me there dwells no good thing*, he limited it to the fleſh in me, that is, in my fleſh; but every Chriſtian has it not in a readineſs ſo to diſtinguiſh. Many ſincere Chriſtians conclude themſelves to have no Grace, becauſe that they ſee they have ſo much Sin; and this is a ſore Affliction. I had hoped, ſays a Chriſtian, that I was in Chriſt, and took much joy in my ſuppoſed ſa-

ved

ved Eſtate; after much fear and terror, I had my heart quieted, and I thought upon right grounds; then I ſet upon Reformation, and I thought was acted in it by the Holy Spirit; but now I fear the work of Converſion was never ſoundly wrought in me, as the Diſciples were diſtreſſed with fear that Jeſus was not the Chriſt; *We hoped it had been he that ſhould have redeemed Iſrael.* I find my ſelf ſo proud, ſo ſenſual, ſo under the power of bruti ſh and baſe Luſts, that it ſeems utterly improbable there ſhould be one ſpark of ſaving Grace in me. Oh ſad Caſe! ſo many Convictions, ſo many Sorrows endured, ſo many Hopes conceived, ſo many Prayers for Mercy poured out, and ſo many Purpoſes and Reſolutions of Obedience taken up, and all loſt; and am I a graceleſs Sinner yet? *O wretched man that I am!* Such a Soul knows, by what it has formerly felt and ſuffered under condemnings of Law and Conſcience, what 'tis to be in an unregenerate Eſtate, and therefore is moſt ſadly afflicted when it falls under fear of being yet in that Eſtate.

3dly, *They many times fear they ſhall never prevail againſt their Indwelling Sin, becauſe they find it ſo ſtrong and active.* They labour ſadly under bondage to their Luſts, and they fear it will never be better with them, and this muſt needs be a ſore trouble to a Soul that has ſo much Grace as to make Sin a burden to him, and to make him hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs. It was a grievous thing to *David*, that God ſeemed to forget him; but that made it a full Affliction indeed, that he begun to fear that it might be ſo *for ever*, *Pſal.* 13. 1. To be always thus enſlaved to vile affections, *&c.* it's a woful miſery. What ſhould I do in this Caſe, ſays the Soul? if I humble my ſelf,

ſelf, acknowledge my Sin, flie to mercy, and cry out for help from Heaven, *&c.* it's but the ſame I have done already, and, for ought I ſee, the evil Spirit prevails upon me, as that of old did upon the Sons of *Sceva*; and if this be the ſucceſs of ſuch Aſſays, what hope but I muſt be a Slave to Satan, and to abominable Luſts while I live?

4thly, *They charge themſelves as Hypocrites in all their Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity hitherto.* If they had been ſincere, they think they could not have been ſo bad and ſo baſe, as they now find themſelves to be within. No, ſure ſuch an heart as mine is, muſt needs be unſanctified and graceleſs, and then have I diſſembled with God and Man all this while? How often have Miniſters comforted me as a Convert, and Chriſtians received me, and prayed for me as a Believer, and thought a good Work was wrought in me, and were glad of it; and alas, I fear, I have been all this while but a painted Hypocrite, as the Martyr ſaid of himſelf. This is a ſore trouble to him that knows the danger that Hypocrites are in, but much more to him that hates Hypocriſy.

5thly, *They ſadly fear they ſhall return to their former wickedneſs, or more, in their lives.* Seeing they have ſo much Sin in themſelves, they can hardly hope better, but that God will give them up to the Luſts of their hearts, and then they believe they ſhall be as bad as any. Work Iniquity with greedineſs, to their own ſhame, and the ſhame of the Religion they have profeſt, and of the Ordinances on which they have attended, and the People of God with whom they have converſed; and this fear is a great Affliction to them, though it be a good ſign of ſincerity.

6thly, *Some-*

6thly, *Sometimes they tremble in the fear of ſome dreadful Judgment, or ſore Rebuke from God to fall upon them.* They think God will not long bear with ſuch ſinful Wretches, Perſons ſo proud, ſo ſenſual, ſo hypocritical, but ſome way or other providentially manifeſt his diſpleaſure againſt them; if they be graceleſs, they know *God is angry with the wicked every day.* And if he intends good to them, they look he ſhould take ſome ſevere Courſe with them; therefore *David* prays, *Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath*, &c. Pſalm 38. 1. They find their hearts ſo lazy, and themſelves ſo formal and hypocritical, they think ſure God will deal ſeverely with them in their Perſons and Families, *&c.*

7thly, *They are often afflicted with the fear of periſhing eternally.* That this fear was riſing in the heart of the Apoſtle himſelf, when he ſpoke theſe words, may very probably be collected from what follows, *Chap.* 8. 1. where he ſeems to encourage himſelf againſt the danger of its Death, and the means which he profeſſes himſelf to uſe for prevention of that danger: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.* And in 1 Cor. 9. 27. *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* Which ſhews that he was not altogether above the fear of it. And indeed this muſt needs be a ſore trouble to them that have taſted of the Wrath of God in their former Convictions, and have had the ſenſe of his Love ſhed abroad in their hearts, and have been comforted in the hope of Glory. Neither *Judas* nor *Cain* ever felt ſuch horror and aſtoniſhment under

der their deſpairs, as a ſincere Chriſtian in this caſe of fears would fall into, if he were not upheld by a ſecret power of Grace. For alas, they never knew ſo much of the Love and Goodneſs of God, as the weakeſt of ſincere Chriſtians knows, nor ever had ſuch deſires and hopes to enjoy him.

I come now to ſome Cauſes of theſe great Troubles in ſincere Chriſtians about Sin within.

1. The firſt Cauſe is,— *The awakened activity of Sin and Satan being effectually diſturbed by the Spirit of Mortification.* When the ſtrong Man keeps the Houſe, all things are at peace, *Luke* 11. 21. *i. e.* till the ſtronger, the *Lord Jeſus*, enters and begins to take away his Goods, and his Harneſs; Then Satan beſtirs himſelf, and raiſes all the force of ſordid Luſts and Corruptions, which lay much more ſtill before; if Sin had been ſo active before, the Sinner would have proceeded to the very acting of the Sin, which now it doth but reach at, being checked and held back by Grace, which makes him ſay in himſelf; how ſhall I do this great wickedneſs? But now, as things are ordered by the bleſſed Work of God, there is a principle of Grace that forbids and hinders the acting of thoſe Sins, to which corrupted Nature is diſpoſed. And that conflict makes a great unquietneſs in the Soul, and ſo gives a Chriſtian much more notice of the wickedneſs of his heart than ever he had; and hence ariſe thoſe Troubles, Diſtreſſes, and Fears, which I have ſpoken of; there being ſo much ado to hold in the wickedneſs that would be breaking out, and to repreſs the inward Motions of it. As when Phyſick is admitted into the Stomach, ill

Humours

Humours are rouzed, and that cauſes hard Gripes, ſick Qualms, and ſad Complaints. Theſe are, *ultimi conatus moribundi peccati*, the laſt Struglings of dying Sin. Firſt Cauſe,

1. It's *the ſubtilty of Satan.*

1. *To ſollicite ſome Men leſs to outward Acts of Sin, while unconverted*; becauſe he ſees and obſerves 'tis uſual with God, to make their great and groſs wickedneſs occaſional to their Conviction and Converſion, according to that in Matth. 21. 31. *Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* And therefore having hold on Men in a natural Eſtate, he is not ſo zealous to excite them to Sin, leſt he ſhould over-do and ſuffer loſs. Therefore, I ſay, he ſolicites ſome leſs; for there are whom he drives on to much outragious Wickedneſs, as the Publicans and Harlots.

2dly, *To ſtir up Men converted as much as he can to Sin, that he may make Apoſtates of them.* If they be not ſincere, which he knows not; or make them ſhame their Profeſſion by groſs Acts of Wickedneſs, or at leaſt cauſe them to go on with the more trouble and diſcomfort.

3dly, *It is the nature of contraries to be excited by the Oppoſition of their contraries*; as we ſee in Nature it ſelf. Water thrown upon the Smith's Coals makes them burn the more fiercely, and ſo in Meteors. Philoſophers tell us, That the cold Cloud gathering about an hot Vapour, makes the Heat gather it ſelf together, and ſo it fires, and thence comes the Lightning and the Thunder. Thus Grace in the Soul preſſing hard upon Corruption, makes it more vehement in its ſtrugling to preſerve it ſelf. Thus 'tis no won-

der though Chriſtians ſtriving againſt Sin, think it grows upon them, becauſe it is, indeed, more active and ſtirring than ever, though not more in the Habit or Principle. They have more evil deſires, and reachings, and wiſhings toward Sin; and thinkings, and ruminations upon it than ever. Sin that was always in them, is more ſinning in them. Luſt is more drawing aſide and enticing, and in conceiving, as *James* 1. 14, 15. than ever it was. *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.* When Luſt hath conceived, it brings forth Sin; and Sin when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth Death, though the body of Sin it ſelf was as much and more in the Soul. And hence come all the forementioned Troubles, the former Apprehenſions which the Soul had of its peace with God, being for a time eclipſed by theſe ſad appearances.

Cauſe 2. *They ſee Sin more clearly than they did before.* The Spirit of Grace is a Spirit of Light in the underſtanding, by which they ſee the evil and ſinfulneſs of all thoſe within-door workings of Corruption, which they ſcarce found any fault withal before, and take notice of thoſe ſtirrings of Sin which they did not mind before; and ſo Sin being indeed more active than it was, and they having better Eyes to ſee it, no marvel that theſe think it much grown, and be otherwiſe much troubled at it, as *Paul* ſays, *I ſee another law rebelling and warring*, &c.

3dly, *They have a greater diſlike of Sin.* As underſtanding more of the evil nature of it; and the worſe apprehenſion they have of it, the more they are troubled and diſheartened at the ſight

of

of it. If you ſee a company of Men coming towards you, and have no bad ſuſpition of them, you are not moved; but if you be informed, and aſſured, they are Thieves and Murderers, then you think they are many more than you accounted them, and your heart trembles at the ſight of them. Now the more Grace is in the Soul, the worſe opinion Men have of Sin, and the more afraid they are of it. I come now to the Uſes. *Firſt*,

Uſe 1. This *ſhews their unſoundneſs in Chriſtianity, whatever their* Profeſſion *and external* Practice may be, who are *untroubled about their indwelling Sin.* All Chriſtians are diſquieted and grieved for the Sin of their Natures, and they eſpecially that have made ſome progreſs in Chriſtianity. But if a Man lives at eaſe from ſorrow and trouble about the internal Eſtate of his Soul, the condition of things within him, ſure he is no ſincere Chriſtian.

Uſe 2. The *ſecond Uſe is for comfort to Chriſtians* labouring under ſuch *Fears and Troubles* about indwelling Sin; but againſt theſe fears there is this comfort:

1ſt, *They are all Arguments of ſincerity.* For if we only intended a form of Godlineſs, we ſhould be at peace with our indwelling ſecret Sin.

2dly, *God has fit comforts in a readineſs for them. Bleſſed are they that thus mourn.* Heavineſs may endure for a Night, but joy comes in the Morning.

ROM. VIII. 35.

Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?

THE *ſixth Period*, or Step of a Chriſtians motion toward Perfection, which I ſhall ſpeak of, is, *His renewed Comfort after a time of Soul-trouble* about his indwelling Sin; and I ſhall ſettle what I have to ſay of it upon theſe words, *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?* They are words of triumph over all the Enemies of the Salvation of Chriſtians, among whom the Apoſtle plainly reckons himſelf, as appears by this word (*us*), *Who ſhall ſeparate us?* Having ſpoken in the third Perſon, concerning *Juſtification* of the Elect, *Verſe* 33, and 34. he concludes with a manifeſt inſertion of himſelf among the Elect and Juſtified, for whom Chriſt makes Interceſſion in Heaven. *Who alſo makes Interceſſion for us*; and thus proceeds to a challenge to all the World to ſeparate him or any of them from the love of Chriſt. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?*

The love of Chriſt in this place, is not the love that Chriſtians bear to Chriſt, though none can aboliſh that; but it's the love of God to them, as Verſe 39. *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* This love cleaves faſt to them, ſettles immoveably upon them, as if it ſhould ſay, *This is my reſting-place, here will I dwell*, Pſalm 132. 14. This is the love of Chriſt unto Chriſtians, according

cording to that in *Zeph.* 3. 17. God reſts in his love; and this happineſs the Apoſtle *Paul* aſſumes to himſelf. None ſhall ſeparate me from the love of Chriſt. It's obſervable, That *Paul* in the former *Chapter* expreſſes ſo much trouble about indwelling Sin, and cries out, *O wretched man that I am!* now declares himſelf a happy Man among the Saints; as he ſpeaks here, *Who ſhall ſeperate us from the love of Chriſt?* And hence we may obſerve,

Doct. *That ſpiritual Comfort interrupted by Soul-troubles, revives in greater meaſures and higher degrees.*

As the Day is more pleaſant after the darkneſs of the Night, and the Spring after the coldneſs of the Winter. Now I ſhall ſhew you how ſpiritual Comforts revive after Soul-trouble for Sin.

1. *By advantage of Soul-trouble, Chriſtians do attain to a better diſcovery of the Work of Grace in themſelves.* It ſerves in the end, to give a Man a right underſtanding of himſelf.—When the Phyſician has ſhaken the Glaſs, he the better obſerves the Symptoms and Indications appearing in the Water. So to put a Man into a Paſſion, is uſually accounted a likely way to know what kind of Nature he is of, and how he ſtands affected.

Thus Chriſtians by Soul-trouble, eſpecially about indwelling Sin,

1*ſt*, They perceive that the Sin that's in them is very grievous, and a ſore burthen to them.

2*dly*, That there is ſome better Principle in them that makes earneſt oppoſition to it.

3*dly*, That they really hunger and thirſt after a full freedom from it in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs. *Who ſhall deliver me?* So then *I my ſelf ſerve the law of God*, Rom. 7. 25. Thus *Peter* by the advantage of his great trouble about denying Chriſt, came to perceive clearly that he loved him, *John* 21. 17. *Lord thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee.* Indeed unquietneſs of the mind makes a Man unable to judge of himſelf, but afterward he lies more open to his own view; as the Water after a Commotion being ſetled again, is more perſpicuous.

2dly, *After Chriſtians have been a while exerciſed with Soul-trouble, God uſually diſpoſes and enables them to devolve the weariſome burden of their cares and fears upon his allſufficient Grace.* To lay their aking Heads, and fainting Hearts in his Boſom, as *David* perſwades himſelf, Pſalm 42. 5. *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? Hope thou in God*, and ſo the Soul returns to its reſt. As Pſal. 116. 7. *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

3dly, *He ordinarily imploys ſome ſpecial part of his Word in his meſſage, to comfort the Soul.* As *David* was quickened, Pſalm 119. 50. *Thy word hath quickened me*; hath made me alive again, as the word ſignifies. So thoſe comforting words in Jer. 31. 3. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love:* come in as an anſwer to a troubled Soul's diſcourſe with it ſelf. *The Lord hath appeared to me of old*, (they are, ſays *Junius* on the place) the words of the godly acknowledging God's former gracious appearing and bounty to them; but complaining implicitely of the cooling of his

his love to them at preſent. To which the Lord gives a preſent anſwer of kindneſs, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.* — The Word (ſaying) is allowed by our Learned Tranſlators to be left out, (as you may ſee by the change of the Character into *Italian*) as if he had ſaid, *Did I love thee of old? Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.* Some have been mightily revived in this caſe, by that in Micah 7. 19. *He will ſubdue our iniquities; and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea.* Some with that in Pſalm 138. 8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerns me*, that is, though I walk in midſt of trouble, as *Verſe* 7. Many with that in Hoſea 14. 4. *I will heal their backſlidings, and love them freely.* And many with that in Iſaiah 50. 10. *Who is he among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs and hath no light? Let him truſt in the name of the Lord.* As if that Text, and this Chapter, *Rom.* 7. were written on purpoſe (as ſure they were) for eſtabliſhing of comfort to Souls that have been troubled about Sin remaining in them.

4thly, *God raiſes great Joy in their hearts, in conſideration of that immutable love of God on which their Salvation depends.* When they come to ſee and conſider, that 'tis not their love to God, but his love to them that ſaves them. This mightily refreſhes their Souls after a weary Combate wite Deſpair and Diffidence, occaſioned by the ſenſe of Sin remaining, and much prevailing in their Soul. *Now then there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*, &c. Rom. 8. 1. That is to ſay, I ſee now my ſafety is not in that I can do for my ſelf againſt my Sin, but in what Chriſt Jeſus has done and ſuffered for them that are in

him, *who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.*

5thly, *God gives them a delightful proſpect of their future Happineſs.* When they have known the trouble of Sin, and are wearied with it, he ſhews them their remaining reſt, as Pſalm 73. 24. *Thou wilt guide me with thy conſel, and afterward receive me to glory.* Then no more Sin in my Soul. No more Temptation in my way, but pure Holineſs ſhall enrich, adorn, and delight my Soul for ever. Now a word or two of the Reaſon, why God is pleaſed to quiet the Souls of his People, when revived after Soul-trouble for Sin.

Reaſ. 1. *God revives them in greater Meaſures,* Becauſe he pities them in their Sorrow and Trouble *they have had about their Sin remaining,* as Jer. 31. 19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth.* As if he had ſaid, I cannot but affectionately think how his heart has been troubled at what I have ſaid againſt him, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I earneſtly remember him ſtill. — As Chriſt had compaſſion on his poor Diſciples, when he ſaw them toiling in the Storm, *Matth* 14. 24. and ſo in Lam. 3. 32. *Though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies.* Becauſe,

2dly, *Soul-trouble prepares a Chriſtian for good meaſures of ſpiritual Comfort.* Sorrow is not given to Chriſtians for it ſelf, but to fit them for the receipt of Comfort, they are caſt down that they may be lifted up. Particularly they are thus afflicted with Sorrow in themſelves for a time,

1. *That*

1. *That they may know 'tis a free gift, and not meerly raiſed up, and reaſoned out by themſelves.* They may have Grace in their Souls, and Promiſes to that Grace, and yet little comfort till God ſends it in to them.

3dly, *That they may the better manage it when it comes*, Men muſt be well humbled, or comfort will make them forget themſelves. As *Paul* was in danger to be lifted up, 2 Cor. 12. 7. *leſt I ſhould be lifted up above meaſure, there was given me a thorne in the fleſh.* Soul Trouble and Affliction is a gift of God to a Chriſtian, when in danger to be lifted up.

4thly, *It's given them in a way of gracious recompence to all their Labour and Pains, in ſtriving againſt their indwelling Sin.* Heaven indeed is the great recompence; and this is ſome beginning of it. God freely rewards Chriſtians for the care and pains they take in preſerving their own Souls againſt the hurt of Temptations, when they are tempted to deſpair in time of Trouble, and crying out, *O wretched man, that I am!* It's a remarkable thing, the ſtory of *Pharoah*'s Daughter, who had Compaſſion on *Moſes*, when ſhe ſaw him weeping. It's ſaid ſhe hired *Moſes*'s Mother to nurſe her own Child, Exod. 2. 9. *Take this child away and nurſe it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.* Now for the Uſes.

Uſe 1. Is to inform us of the exceeding great love of God to believing Souls, that has ſo much pity to them when they are troubled in themſelves, and is ſo careful to revive them. When the poor diſquieted Soul is thinking, Sure God has

has no favour for me, has caſt me off, and left me to my ſelf and *Satan*. Then is he meditating mercies and comfort to that Soul, and preparing the Soul for the receipt of it. *Iſa.* 55. 8. *My thoughts are not your thoughts. I know the thoughts that I think toward you*, ſaith the Lord, *thoughts of peace*, Jer. 20. 11.

Uſe 2. *Is to encourage Chriſtians labouring under Soul-troubles, eſpecially about Sin dwelling and remaining and working in them*; ſuch trouble ſerves to prepare Chriſtians for comfort, and lays a good foundation for it. Your Comfort is at hand: Say to your Souls as *David* to his in the 42d *Pſalm*, ver. 5. *Hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him.*

PHIL. IV. 13.

I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me.

THE *ſeventh Period* of a Chriſtan's motion or progreſs toward perfection that I ſhall treat of, is. *A ſetled dependance on the ſtrength and power of Chriſt for the performance of the whole Work and Charge of Chriſtianity.* When a Chriſtian, under ſome comfortable perſuaſions of his peace with God, has ſet upon reformation of his Life, and finding himſelf ſtrongly hindred in that work by his indwelling Sin; has made earneſt eſſays to mortify his Luſts, and cleanſe his heart from wickedneſs; and when by reaſon of the difficulty of that Deſign he has been ſadly troubled and diſquieted in himſelf, it pleaſes God in ſitting time

to

to raiſe up and revive the weary and diſheartened Combatant with ſpiritual conſolation (of which lately); and now the Soul having had ſo much experience of it ſelf, and of God; his own inſufficiency, and the All-ſufficiency of Divine Grace; reſolvedly betakes himſelf to a fiducial reliance on the gracious Power of Chriſt, for the carrying on, and management of all the duty incombant on him as a Chriſtian; which is intimated in this Text, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me.* That we may clearly underſtand them, it's to be noted,

1ſt, *They are words of ſelf-encouragement to ſo great and weighty undertaking:* As *Joel* 3. *Let the weak ſay I am ſtrong*; i. e. Let him put on a noble and generous Reſolution, and gird up the loins of his mind to warlike Enterprizes. Thus *Paul* here, *I can do all.* I am ſtrong for all things, ready armed and furniſhed with ſtrength for all things which God ſets me to do.

2dly, *The work to which he ſo encourages himſelf, is the whole duty of Chriſtianity*; to do that which is to be done in a ſtate of Proſperity, and to ſuffer what is to be undergone in a day of adverſity, as verſe 12. to do and ſuffer as a Chriſtian; this is all: (That is) it comprehends the Work and Duty of a Chriſtian; as *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man:* This is all of man.

3dly, *The Argument wherewith he thus encourages himſelf, is not any opinion of his own ſtrength*; yea, his words import a denial of any ſuch confidence. I am ſtrong for all through Chriſt, implies him not otherwiſe ſufficient for any thing; according to the words of our Saviour, *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.*

4thly,

4thly, *The ſtrength on which he profeſſes his reliance, is the power of Chriſt working in him.* Chriſt ſtrengthening me within. A ſtrength not only given by Jeſus Chriſt, but acted and exerted by him; not a ſtrength received from Chriſt, but the ſtrength of Chriſt imployed in him. Chriſt in me ſtrengthening me.

5thly, *He attained to this dependance on the Power of Chriſt by the benefit of Experience:* He had learned it, *verſe* 12. As men learn matters of Practice by many Experiments: So States-men learn their Policy, and Trades-men their Arts: So *David* learned to keep the Commands of God by experience of the Evil of Affliction that attends the neglect of them, and the comfort that follows a diligent obſervance of them, even in affliction, as *Pſal.* 119. 21. *Thou haſt rebuked the proud that are curſed, which do err from thy commandments.* Thus *Paul* having had experience of his own weakneſs, and the power of Chriſt in him; was now come to this, That he could confidently undertake the whole Duty belonging to him as a Chriſtian, and an Apoſtle too, depending on the Power of Chriſt. And hence we may obſerve.

Doct. 1. *That Experience brings Chriſtians to a ſtedfaſt reliance on the gracious power of Chriſt for the performance of their whole Chriſtian Duty.*

1. I ſhall give you Scripture-Arguments to prove, that Chriſtians do depend on Jeſus Chriſt for his gracious Power in the performance of their Chriſtian Duty.

Firſt, *The promiſe of perſeverance is made peculiarly to them that depend upon the gracious Power of God for it.*

it. Iſa. 40. 31. *They that wait on the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength*; 'tis promiſed to them that wait on God for ſtrength. Now ſee the former Verſe, and you find the reſt excluded; the Youths that truſt to their own ſtrength ſhall fail: Hence it's manifeſtly conſequent, That all perſevering Chriſtians that make a conſtant progreſs in Godlineſs, and grow up to maturity, do thus depend on the Grace of God for it, *Joh.* 15. 4, 5. In the 4th Verſe our Saviour commands his Diſciples to abide in him ——*as the branch doth in the vine*—— Now men are in Chriſt by Faith, and ſo their continuing in him, is in a continual exerciſe of Faith; and particularly, Faith, for a Fruit-bearing Virtue, as the Branch cleaves to the Vine, to derive nouriſhment from it, and be made fruitful by it: And to ſuch as abide ſo in him, he promiſes that they ſhall bring forth much Fruit, *Verſe* 5. So all fruitful and thriving Chriſtians do certainly depend on Jeſus Chriſt for ſtrength and ſpirit requiſite to Chriſtian duty. The Conditions of Promiſes are the qualities of thoſe to whom they are performed. If a man be juſtified, 'tis certain he is a Believer, becauſe 'tis promiſed to ſuch; and ſo if a man makes a good proficiency in Chriſtian practice, 'tis evident he depends on the ſtrength of Chriſt, becauſe 'tis promiſed only to ſuch.

2dly, *It's their earneſt prayer, that they may be enabled for their duty in the ſtrength of God.* That they may be ſtrong in the power of his might. As *David* prays in the 119th *Pſalm* 35. *Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.* Though he had not only been exerciſed to obedience, but had found pleaſure in it; yet he knew himſelf unable to go on without the Power of God, and therefore begs that he may be

be made to go. Matter of Precept is matter of Prayer to a Godly man; what God requires of him, that he requeſts of God; what God bids him do, that he begs God to do in him. The Apoſtles, *Acts* 4. 22. was mightily confirmed with ſtrength and courage for their work of Preaching the Goſpel, and yet they pray for further ſupplies, as acknowledging themſelves unable to go one ſtep further without the ſtrength of God, though they had gone with much boldneſs ſo far already.

Prayer is the Language of Faith; what a ſerious Petitioner asks of God, that he depends and relies upon him for: According to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, in the 62d *Pſalm* 8. *Truſt in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts to him.*

3*dly*, They humbly acknowledge all that they do in the way of duty, to the grace of God working in them, *Phil.* 1. laſt. So in 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all—— according to this working: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* So in 2. *Gal.* 20. *I live, yet not I,* but Chriſt liveth in me. So the Church confeſſes all her work to be the work of God, *Iſa.* 26. 12. *Thou haſt wrought all our works for us,* or in us: All which plainly demonſtrates, that experienced godly men do conſtantly and in a ſetled way depend and rely on the power of Chriſt for the performance of their duty.

Now I ſhall ſhew you in the

2. Second place, How Experience brings them to it.

First, *Upon trial and experience they find themſelves utterly unable to maintain the practice of godlineſs in their own ſtrength.* At firſt ſetting out, Chriſtians uſually

uſually betake themſelves to reformation and holineſs of Life, as if they were now able enough for it of themſelves in the uſe of that which they have attained; thinking that the hatred which they have to Sin, which has coſt them ſo much humiliation, and their high eſteem of Godlineſs, will carry them through all they have to do in obedience to God.

They know indeed that all that belongs to their Salvation, is of Grace, and therefore do in ſome meaſure truſt in Chriſt for it. But yet at firſt there is but little of this Faith in them, and much of Self-confidence remaining, till Grace has wrought it out; and therefore they are much perſuaded at firſt that they ſhall diſcharge all Chriſtian Offices in the ſtrength of thoſe Reſolutions and Purpoſes of Holineſs which are raiſed in them, and ſcarce apprehend any danger of being at any time drawn away from their known duty, to the Sin which they have heartily forſaken.

But after a-while, the ſenſe they have of indwelling Sin, makes them ready to deſpair of any progreſs at all in Chriſtianity, becauſe they are ſo ſtrongly diverted by the body of Death from the good they would do, and carried to the evil which they would not. This makes them cry out, O wretched man! and raiſes in them that woful Soul-trouble, of which I have been lately ſpeaking; and ſo brings them to that ſorrowful acknowledgment of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 18. *To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. Moſes* Example is a fit Emblem of a Chriſtian in this Caſe. At firſt he went out among his Brethren in *Egypt*, and ſmites an *Egyptian*, and reproves an injurious *Iſraelite*: As if he would preſently deliver the Nation,

tion, and reduce them to a free Eſtate even of himſelf, *Exod.* 2. 11. with *Acts* 7. 35. *Moſes, whom they refuſed; ſaying, who made thee a ruler, and a judge? The ſame did God ſend to be a ruler and a deliverer:* He ſuppoſed his Brethren would have underſtood, that by his hand God would deliver them. But afterward having found the work ſo hard, he could not hope to do it, though God expreſly ſet him about it, and gave him his Commiſſion for it. *Exod.* 3. 10, 11. *Come now therefore and I will ſend thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayſt bring forth my people the children of Iſrael out of Egypt: And Moſes ſaid unto God, Who am I, that I ſhould go unto Pharaoh, and that I ſhould bring forth the children of Iſrael out of Egypt?* Yea, when he had now had ſome experience of the power and preſence of God with him in the undertaking; yet he ſpeaks as deſpairing of bringing it to any effect, becauſe he found ſo much difficulty in it: *Exod.* 5. 22, 23. *Moſes returned unto the Lord, and ſaid; Why is it that thou haſt ſent me? for ſince I came to Pharoah to ſpeak in thy name, he has done evil to this people: Neither haſt thou delivered thy people at all.* So Chriſtians newly converted, make almoſt nothing of reſolving, if God will pardon them, and ſpeak peace to them, to do all that they ſhall know to be duty, and breaking off from all Sin for ever after. But in proceſs of time they find Sin ſo mighty in them, that they think they ſhall never do any thing to purpoſe in that work of Godlineſs: So they find themſelves utterly unable for obedience, and holy walking in their own ſtrength: This is the firſt Experiment tending to this dependance on the power of Grace in Chriſt.

2*dly, They find that there is a preſence of God ſometimes with them, helping them againſt all weakneſs, to perform*

perform their duty with much eaſe and pleaſure; ſo they are marvellouſly encouraged in truſting God; Enlivened in ſeeking of him, animated in ſpeaking and acting for him, and made free and chearful in ſubmitting to his Providence; inſomuch that they cannot but wonder at themſelves that they ſhould be ſo tranſported beyond their ordinary bounds of weakneſs, heavineſs and indiſpoſition, as *Hab.*3.19. *The Lord God is my ſtrength, he maketh my feet like hinds feet, and he will make me to walk upon high places*: And on this occaſion they many times err, thinking that it will continue always ſo with them as they have found it.

3dly, *They find that this aſſiſtance uſually comes in moſt, when they are moſt ſenſible of their own weakneſs*, and deſpairing of themſelves; 2 *Cor.* 12.10. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*: The like you ſhall ſee in the 94th *Pſalm* 18. *When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* That is very notable and obſervable to this purpoſe, *Judges* 6. 14. *The Angel bids Gideon go forth in this thy might*; why, what was his might? He being humble in the ſenſe of his weakneſs, God would be with him.

4thly, *They find that the more earneſtly they look to God for his help, the more ſenſibly he is pleaſed to relieve and ſuccour them with it*; as *David* ſaid in the 28th *Pſalm* 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength, my heart truſted in him, and I am helped.* They fail moſt when they either forget their weakneſs, and think to go forth as at other times (as *Sampſon* ſaid) or when they conceive no hope of help from God, but provoke him by deſpair to leave them for the time to ſink in their ſorrows: And thus Experience plainly leads them to a conſtant and ſteddy dependance on the gracious Power of

God for all their work and ſuffering: When they find themſelves unable, God enabling them; and that when they are moſt ſenſible of their weakneſs, and when they wait moſt earneſtly on him for ſtrength. What can be more plainly taught, than all this teaches them to depend on the power of Grace for the performance of their whole Chriſtian duty? Now for the *Uſes*.

Uſe 1. *This ſhews how far they are from the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, who make their weakneſs an Apology for their ſloth and negligence, inſtead of looking to Chriſt for ſtrength of grace.* They caſt off the Duties of Repentance, and new Obedience; and plead for themſelves, that they are not able of themſelves for ſuch work, and God has not given them power and grace that's requiſite to it, and therefore they muſt let it alone unaſſayed, unendeavoured, till more ſtrength comes.

Firſt, *'Tis evident they do not love Chriſtian duty.* They are unwilling to it, or they would be impatient of their weakneſs; crying out for ſtrength as the poor *Syrophenician* Woman, when Chriſt ſeemed to neglect her; *Lord help me*, Matth. 15. 24, 25.

2dly, *They do not heartily believe the neceſſity of holineſs and obedience to Salvation*; that of the *Apoſtle*, Heb. 12. 14. *Without holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, has no power on their hearts. Nor that in 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* For let's reaſon it a little. If you believe theſe things, why do you not live holy and religious lives? Why

Why do you ſuffer your Luſts and bruitiſh Appetites to lead and carry you to ſuch Company, and ſuch Courſes, as you know are unſuitable to Chriſtianity; and ſuch as you are aſhamed Perſons of any Religion and ſoberneſs ſhould take notice of? Why do you not ſet up a ſtrict exerciſe of Religion in your hearts and lives, and devote your ſelves to the practice of Godlineſs? If you ſay you do not, becauſe you cannot, you have no ability. Then, it ſeems, you think you cannot but periſh, you cannot but be damned; for he that cannot be holy, cannot ſee God; and cannot but fall under the Vengeance of Eternal Flames; and do you believe this? No, no, if you did, you would not live an hour at quiet, never enjoy your ſelves, or any thing in this World; but be always crying out, O *wretched man*, &c. No, I'll never think you can be ſuch monſters as to believe you are under a neceſſity of periſhing, and yet be pleaſed and quieted in that Eſtate—— But you will be ſecure, and hope the beſt; and quarrel at them that would diſturb you. Well: If you will rather disbelieve God, and make him a Liar, than be diſturbed in your ſecurity, who can help it? you will ſhortly find your Error.

Uſe 2. *It informs us of the unſoundneſs of that Faith which looks only at ſafety from miſery, and not at the Spirit of Grace and Holineſs to do all things through Chriſt.* True Saving-faith relies on God for grace to the performance of duty, as well as for the Reward, and for a freedom from Puniſhment: Though at firſt Chriſtians are uſually but low in this act of Faith, yet Experience brings them to it. The third *Uſe*

Uſe 3. *Is to perſuade Chriſtians, troubled about their inability for holy actions, to yield themſelves to the Counſel of God's conduct of Experience, as it leads to a reliance and waiting on God for ſtrength of his Grace*; That which the Word requires, *Iſa.* 40. laſt. *To wait on the Lord, that they may renew their ſtrength.* You find your ſelves weak, *&c.* And do you not ſometimes find God relieving you againſt your weakneſs, and that when you are moſt preſſed down under the ſenſe of it; eſpecially when you look up moſt earneſtly to him for help? What can be more plainly ſpoken, than this ſpeaks the Language of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 26. 4. *Truſt in the Lord for ever: For in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.*

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1 JOHN I. 3.

That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

THE *Eighth degree of a Chriſtian's Motion toward Perfection, is a ſpiritual Communion or Converſation with God.* When God has brought a Believer to a ſetled dependance on his gracious Power for the practice of Godlineſs, He gradually draws him into a converſe and intimacy with himſelf; which is at leaſt comprehended in theſe words, *Our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.*

The word *Fellowſhip* ſignifies Communion or Communication, when two or more Perſons partake of the ſame thing, as they that feed on the ſame Diet and Table together, are called Commoners; So they whoſe Cattle partake of the ſame Paſture, are ſaid to Common together; and ſo they are called partakers of the Altar who eat together; or alike of the Sacrifices, as in 1 *Cor.* 10. 18. This is an ordinary Signification of the word Fellowſhip, Communion, or Converſation.—— But when 'tis referred to God and Chriſt in Scripture, it has a more free Signification.

1ſt, *Sometimes it imports Aſſimilation and Conformity of Chriſtians to God the Father, and Chriſt the Mediator.* So in as much as Saints are like God in

holineſs, *They are called partakers of his divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Holineſs in Chriſtians is not the ſame that is in God, for that's Eſſential; but ſomewhat Analogous: So Chriſtians conformed to Chriſt in Sufferings, are ſaid to partake of his Sufferings, 1 Pet. 4. 13. *Rejoyce, in as much as ye are partakers of Chriſts ſufferings*; (that is) *He ſuffered, and they ſuffer likewiſe*; as Verſe 1.

2dly, *It is uſed to ſignify the virtual Intereſt that Chriſtians had, and have in the Death and Mediatory Performances of Chriſt.* The benefit whereof is derived to them, as if themſelves had died, and done as he did for them, Phil. 3. 10. *That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* Fellowſhip of his Sufferings; (that is) what it is to partake with the Saints of the benefit of his Sufferings, as if I had ſuffered with him; in which reſpect Chriſtians are ſaid to have died, riſen, aſcended with Chriſt, and to ſit in Heaven with him, as *Col.* 3. 1. and *Eph.* 2. 6. *He has raiſed us up together, and made us to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt.* And Col. 3. 1. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above.*

3dly, *It notes Converſe and Society between God and Man.* 2 Cor. 6. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion hath light with darkneſs?* (that is) They cannot joyn or abide together. God, who is Light, can have no Converſation with Unbelievers, who are Darkneſs. *Chriſt with Belial, Ver.* 15. therefore you ſhould have none. Hence the word *Companions*, Heb. 10. 33. *Ye became companions of them which were ſo uſed*, that is, *ſuffer like them.* And this

this I underſtand to be eſpecially intended in this place, *Our fellowſhip is with the Father.* Chriſtians are at firſt Converſion conformed to God in ſome degree of Holineſs, and made partakers of the benefits of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt in their Juſtification and Adoption. But acquaintance and converſe with God, they attain to by degrees, when they have had experience of him and his ways. Now 'tis evident, the Apoſtle is here directing Chriſtians to ſomething higher than they had yet attained to. They were now the Children of God, *Chap.* 3. 2. And had the Unction of the Spirit, *Chap.* 2. 20. But he directs to ſomething in which they might be Copartners with himſelf and others, whoſe Fellowſhip he could truly ſay was with the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* To have fellowſhip with the Son, is to have fellowſhip with the Father; as to ſee the Son, is to ſee the Father, John 14. 19. *Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more; but ye ſee me.* God tranſacts all things with his Church, in the Perſon of his Son the Mediator. He is doer of all ſince his Aſcenſion, and is always with his to the end of the World, Matth. 28. 20. *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* So Communion with the Father, is Communion with the Son. Again, Chriſt being now aſcended, manages all in a Divine way, and inviſibly; therefore they that have fellowſhip with him, are ſaid to have fellowſhip with the Father. So the Apoſtle having attained this fellowſhip with God the Father and Son, and directing others to it; We may gather this Obſervation,

Doct. *That Chriſtians as they proceed in Godlineſs, they grow into an intimate acquaintance and fellowſhip with God.* That your fellowſhip may be with us: *And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* There is much proof I might eaſily give of this, Phil. 3. 20. *For our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Our Converſation is in Heaven, (that is) with God. So *Aſaph* in Pſalm 73. 23. ſays, *I am continually with thee.* So *Enoch and Noah walked with God.* So in John 14. 23. our Saviour ſays, *If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* So in Pſalm 139. 18. ſaies *David, I am continually with thee.* And ſo in ſeveral other places we find the Intimacy and Communion with them that walk with God. And this comes to the point in hand. That Chriſtians, as they proceed in Godlineſs, they grow into an intimate Acquaintance and Fellowſhip with God. Take ſome inſtances of the Converſe and Fellowſhip which Chriſtians have with God.

1. *They confer much with God in Holy Meditation. Meditation is a ſecret Conference, and cloſe Diſcourſe between God and the Soul.* Good thoughts, as they come into the mind, are the very whiſperings of God; and as they are the act of the Mind upon God, they are the proper Language of the Soul ſpeaking to him, as Pſalm 27. 8. *Thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face;* my heart anſwered and ſaid, *thy face Lord will I ſeek.* It's obſervable in the *Hebrew* Tongue, that the Scripture uſes two words for Meditation, and both ſignify to ſpeak, there

there being in Divine Meditation ſuch a cloſe Diſcourſe between God and the Soul. And though all Chriſtians are more or leſs exerciſed in Divine Meditation, yet to hold a cloſe and conſtant Intercouſe with God in it, is very peculiar to Chriſtians of good experience and maturity.

2dly, *They bemoan themſelves familiarly to God in all their Grievances.* And he anſwers them in the Conſolation of his Spirit. We have an Expreſſion of this of *David*, in Pſalm 142. 2. *I poured out my complaint before him; I ſhewed before him my trouble.* If any thing be amiſs with them, they run preſently to him with their Complaint, and ſo he eaſes them, and relieves them. Pſalm 34. 18. *When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* Chriſtians are full of complaints to him, every thing that troubles and grieves them, is a matter of complaint, and ſo they give him frequent occaſion to expreſs his kindneſs to them. It's true, Chriſtians are uſed to this way of opening their Griefs to God, from their youth up; But are much more free and familiar in it after they have gained experience of the Goodneſs of God, and are eſtabliſhed in their confidence in him, and ſo they grow more inward with him.

3dly, *They go confidently to him for the ſupply of all their wants:* And he ſatisfies them with gracious anſwers of their Prayers. The Spirit of Prayer is in all Chriſtians, but they are well-grown Chriſtians that can come boldly in all caſes to the Throne of Grace, and perceive when they are anſwered, according to that in 1 John 5 14. *This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

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A Chriſtian that prays the Prayer of a well-eſtabliſhed Faith, as he comes to God in good aſſurance of acceptance, ſo he finds his Prayer one way or other anſwered to his ſatisfaction. *David* found an anſwer to his Prayer for the Life of his Child, in an acquieſcence in the now diſcovered Will of God, 2 Sam. 12. 23. *I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me.* *David* takes comfort in this, *I ſhall go to him.* He aroſe and went to the Houſe of God and worſhipped; what elſe would he have done if the Child's Life had been granted? Why he could have done no better, for he had ſatisfaction, and was aſſured that he ſhould go to his Child. Thus the Apoſtle *Paul* found a good anſwer to his Prayer, for the departing of Satan's Meſſenger, 2 Cor. 12. 9. *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Now this anſwer was matter of gladneſs to the Apoſtle, *Moſt gladly therefore will I rejoyce in my infirmities.* And Chriſt himſelf had his Prayer anſwered, even in that which he feared. And this is parallel to that of *David*, Pſalm 65. 5. *By terrible things in righteouſneſs wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation.* Terrible things, things to be wondered at.

4thly, *They expreſs their Joys to him in the acknowledgment of his Mercy, and he inſpires them with the hopes of more.* It is a ſpecial part of friendly intimacy, to impart our joys to our Friends, and tell them the things that pleaſe us, to ſhew them ſuch Goods or Rarities as we have about us, wherewith we our ſelves are taken. So Chriſtians, and eſpecially thoſe that are grown up to good maturity, are much addicted to acknowledge the mercy that God has ſhewed them, and not only pour out their Sorrows, but expreſs

expreſs their Joys before him, as *David* in Pſalm 63. 4, 5. *Thus will I bleſs thee while I live. My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow.* It is, inded, a ſpecial property of a well-grown Chriſtian, to be much diſpoſed to thankſgiving; and telling not only others, but God himſelf, what he has done for his Soul. And herein Chriſtians have a comfortable converſe with God, in as much as he not only accepts their Praiſes, but uſually warms and chears their hearts in ſuggeſting to them hopes of more and greater Mercy. See *Pſalm* 23. 2, 3. *David* there acknowledges to God what he has done for him, *Thou* (ſayeſt he) *maketh me to lye down in green paſtures; he leadeth me beſides the ſtill waters; he reſtoreth my ſoul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteouſneſs for his name ſake.* And then he concludes, Ver. 6. *Surely goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever.* I ſhall add but one place more, and that is in *Pſalm* 73. 23, 24. whereas *David* was conſidering what the Lord had done for him, and how gracious he was to him, this comes in, *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* As he ſent *Nathan* to *David*, when he was conſidering and acknowledging the favour he had received, 2 Samuel 7. 11. *Alſo the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee an houſe.*

5thly, *They retire fiducially to him in caſes of danger, and he encourages them in hopes of ſafety.* See Pſalm 57. 2, 3. *I will cry to God moſt high. He ſhall ſend from heaven, and ſave me.* And ſo *Pſalm* 91. 1, 2. and throughout. It is a Soliloquie all along: *He that dwelleth in the ſecret place of the moſt High, ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty. I will*

ſay

ſay of the Lord, He is my rock, and my fortreſs: my God, in him will I truſt, &c.

6thly, *They conſult him in all doubtful caſes, and he graciouſly reſolves them. I will,* ſays *David, cry unto God moſt high, and he ſhall ſave me.* And the ſame *David,* Pſalm 119. 24. ſays, *Thy teſtimonies are my delight, and my counſellors.* And Iſaiah 30. 21. *This is the way, walk ye in it.* As *Peter* in Matth. 18. 21, 22. ſaid, *Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven.* So *Aſaph, Thou wilt guide me by thy counſel.*

7thly, *They reaſon out their Troubles with him when any Providence of his is leſs ſatisfying to them, and he contents and pacifies them.* This is a point of great freedom and familiarity that godly Men have with God, and a very gracious condeſcention of his to them. See Jer. 12. 1, 2. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* And Pſal. 73. 16, 17. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the ſanctuary of God.*

So *Moſes* in Exod. 5. 23. *Why is it that thou haſt ſent me?* So was *Moſes* ſeemingly diſſatisfied with God's dealing with him. But look into Chap. 6. Verſe 1. *The Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Now ſhalt thou ſee what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a ſtrong hand ſhall he let them go, and with a ſtrong hand ſhall he drive them out of his land.* And thus ordinarily when Chriſtians ſet themſelves in an humble way to treat with God about their Troubles, he caſts ſuch Thoughts into their Minds, and brings ſuch Words and Works of his to their remembrance,

brance, as ſhall ſerve to content and quiet them, as if he were (as in a good ſenſe we well ſay he is) unwilling that there ſhould be a miſunderſtanding between him and them. As the Father anſwers his eldeſt Son, *Luke* 15. 25. when he was diſſatisfied with his dealing, and was angry, and would not go in; he ſaith unto him, *Son, thou art ever with me.*

8thly, *They give him all that they have in the World, as he has occaſion to uſe it*; and he requites it to them in gracious Providences and Spiritual Comforts, Mark 10. 28, 29, 30. *Peter began to ſay unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, There is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſter, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake, and the goſpels, but he ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life.* So Heb. 10. 34. *He made them to know in themſelves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* And ſo gave them as much joy in loſing, as they had before in poſſeſſing, and 'tis likely much more.

9thly, *They always preſs after more intimate knowledge of him*; and he reveals himſelf ſtill more to them, Pſalm 63. 8. *My ſoul followeth hard after thee.* And Hoſea 6. 3. *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord:* So graciouſly does God uphold and ſupport his People when they follow hard after him. Chriſtians they deſire alway to *behold his beauty, and enquire in his temple,* Pſalm 27. 4. And he leads them from Room to Room, and brings them to his Preſence-Chamber, John 14. 21, 23. *He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifeſt*

niſeſt my ſelf to him. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. I come now to the Uſe, which is of Exhortation.

Uſe. To exhort Chriſtians to an earneſt Proſecution of Communion with God, Job 22. 21. *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace.* It's that to which all Chriſtians are appointed, and by degrees growing up into it. The happineſs of heaven will be your Joy on Earth.

Earneſtly ſeek peace with God by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, that you may have the aſſurance of an agreement with him, elſe you cannot walk with him, Amos 3. 3. *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

2. *Walk in the light,* Verſe 7. (that is)

1ſt, *Regularly in the Law,* Pſalm 119. 1. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.*

2dly, *Uprightly and ſincerely, not pretending Godlineſs, and hiding Sin; but in plainneſs and integrity,* John 3. 21. *He that doeth truth, cometh to the light;* likeneſs fits for Converſation. God is upright, as in Pſalm 92. 15. *To ſhew that the Lord is upright, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteouſneſs in him.* So Pſalm 15. 1, 2. *Lord, who ſhall abide in thy tabernacle? who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteouſneſs, and ſpeaketh the truth in his heart.* And again, Pſalm 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance doth behold the upright.* Thus now by our earneſt ſeeking peace with God, and walking

ing in the light, we ſhall come to have ſincerity, and by ſincerity we ſhall have communion with God, and fellowſhip with the Father, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

PHILIP. I. 23.

For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is far better.

THE Ninth Degree or Period of a Chriſtian's motion toward his appointed and intended Perfection, which I ſhall ſpeak of, is, *An earneſt deſire to be removed out of this World, unto the glorious preſence of Chriſt in Heaven*; which is here intimated in theſe words, *Having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.*

A Chriſtian has two great matters to conſider and attend in this world, *His Work and his Wages, Duty and Reward.* And as he loves to be employed in the former, ſo he longs to enjoy the latter: Between theſe two *Paul* was in a ſtrait, not knowing which to make a preſent choice of, in caſe it ſhould have been in his own power to take which he would; *I wot not which I ſhall chuſe*: (that is) *which I ſhould rather chuſe*, as the words do ſignify, being an *Hebrew* form of Speech; *I know not, I wot not which I ſhall chuſe.* He thought it long ere he was at reſt, and yet he thought it hardly time to leave work. He knew indeed to be with Chriſt was better for him, but yet he thought it needful for the *Philippians*, and other Chriſtians, that he ſhould abide in the

fleſh,

fleſh, and conſequently that Chriſt had yet further need or uſe of his labour, and this made him doubtful which he ſhould chuſe; not abſolutely, but with reſpect to the preſent time. Not whether he ſhould chuſe to be in Heaven with Chriſt, or abide alway on earth; for he muſt needs chuſe Heaven rather. It is not whether he ſhould be with Chriſt, or abide in the fleſh; but whether he ſhould now preſently go hence to Chriſt, or for ſome time continue in his ſervice among his People; and in this reſpect *he was in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart*, Phil. 1. 23, 24.

The Apoſtle *Paul* was now a Believer, highly confirmed and eſtabliſhed in Chriſt. A man of great attainment in Grace; and ſo what he here ſpeaks of himſelf, is eſpecially applicable to well-grown and experienced Chriſtians, though there is ſome beginning of the ſame deſire even in the loweſt Chriſtian, a deſire to be with Chriſt—— *Having a deſire.*

The word *deſire* is ſufficiently underſtood by all; but to *have a deſire*, is more in ſignification than *to deſire*; it notes a ſetled and habitual deſire. To deſire, is but an Act, which may be ſudden and tranſient; but to have a deſire of any thing, is to be ſo affected to it, as when a man is always reaching after it in the intention of his heart, when he remembers it. *Having a deſire to depart*—This word *to depart* is a plain word, though Interpreters make many Gloſſes upon it, and obſerve ſome one, ſome another Metaphor in it. It ſignifies ſometimes to return, as a man returns home, from whence he has been abroad, as *Luke* 12. 36. *Be ye like ſervants that wait for their Lord, when he ſhall return from the wedding.* Sometimes

it

it ſignifies to depart and go away, and both ways it agrees to death, which is a *return of the Soul*, as *Solomon* ſays, *to God*, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. And ſo is that word uſed to which this in the Text anſwers, Pſal. 90. 3. *Return ye children of men*, (that is) you that have been abroad in the world, come home again, and *return ye children of men*. So it ſignifies a going away of a man out of this world, 2 Tim. 4. 6. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* Thus the Apoſtle expreſſes his deſire to go out of this world, *Having a deſire to depart*; the next is, *to be with Chriſt.* Though Chriſtians have now communion with Chriſt in Faith and Holineſs, (as was aforeſaid) yet comparing their preſent with their future nearneſs to him, the Apoſtle might well ſay as he does in 2 Cor. 5. 7. *For in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven.* And ver. 6. *While we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* To be with Chriſt, as the Apoſtle here ſpeaks, is to be in the ſtate of Glory, 1 Theſſ. 4. 17, 18. *Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.* And ſo in John 14. 3. *That where I am, there ye may be alſo.* Now ſays the Apoſtle, *I have a deſire co depart, and be with Chriſt*; that is, much rather than to be on the earth. And hence we may obſerve:

Doctr. *That a well-ſetled and eſtabliſhed Chriſtian lives in an earneſt deſire to leave this world, and be with Chriſt in heaven.* He has a deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt. In 2 Cor. 5. 2. *For in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our*

houſe which is from heaven ; (that is) ill at eaſe here, but deſire to go hence, and be with Chriſt. So we find that excellent perſon *Simeon* addreſſing himſelf to God, and ſaying, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*, Luke 2. 29. So in 1 *Cor.* 1. 7. The Apoſtle commends the attainments of the *Corinthians* in this reſpect, that they had a deſire to the coming of Jeſus Chriſt; *So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* So in *Rom.* 8. 23. Chriſtians are ſaid to *wait for the adoption*; that is, that inheritance whereunto they are adopted; and that is, *the redemption of the body* from the hand of the grave. In all which places it's evident, that well ſetled and eſtabliſhed Chriſtians live in an earneſt deſire to leave this world, and be with Chriſt in Heaven: For,

Firſt, *He earneſtly deſires to leave the world behind him, to depart, as being much out of conceit with the things that uſually invite men to live here, and weary of them.* His heart falls off from that which to other men ſeems deſirable in the world, and he is well content to take his final leave of it, as *Aſaph* ſays in Pſal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* But to ſpeak more particularly, there are four things eſpecially that take off the heart of an experienced Chriſtian from the deſirable things of the world.

1ſt. *His many diſappointments in them.* He has been ſo often deceived in his opinion of them, and expectation from them, that he is now weary of his converſe with them; How oft, ſaid he, have I found trouble, where I looked for comfort?

fort? and diſſatisfaction, where I thought to have had ſome kind of contentment? why ſhould I loſe any more hopes?

2dly, *The hindrance which they give him in the way of duty.* He finds that his Eſtate, (more or leſs) Credit and Eſteem among Men, his Relations, and all earthly Comforts, do many times hang upon him as Weights and Burdens, and make him go ſlowly and heavily toward Heaven; they ſuggeſt fear to him, when he ſhould be reſolved for God; they fill him with cares, when he ſhould be only minding things heavenly; give him many Arguments of diverſion from the ſtrait way, *&c.* make him go ſorrowful, as the young man, *If he went to ſell all*, &c. *Mat.* 19. 22.

3dly, *The many occaſions of Sin which they miniſter to him.* They do not only hinder his progreſs, but give him many Falls; he often ſtumbles at them, and hurts himſelf, *&c.* 'Tis true, 'tis not the world's fault but his own; but finding himſelf ſo diſpoſed and tempted that the world has always much advantage againſt him, he is very willing to be gone out of the danger of being ſeduced by it.

4thly, *The Avocation which it is always offering to his heart, from better and more worthy things.* He cannot love God, and delight in him, and pleaſe himſelf with him as he would do, for the world; though the world be in ſome degree crucified to him, and he to it, yet 'tis always tampering with his heart, and ſuing for his affections, *&c.* and ſo he is weary of it. But

Secondly, *He earneſtly deſires to be with Chriſt in heaven*, Pſal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* And he deſires to be with Chriſt in heaven:

1*ſt*. For *the full freedom from Sin, and compleat Holineſs, which he foreſees there to be had and enjoyed. When he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. And this was *Paul*'s deſire after the Reſurrection, Phil. 3. 11. *If by any means I might attain to the reſurrection*, (that is) the ſtate in which the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe, that is *in glory*, 1 Cor. 15. 43. Perfection of grace is glory, and in that ſtate the godly man ariſes.

2*dly*, For *that full contentment and ſatisfaction which he propounds to himſelf in the enjoyment of Chriſt*. He finds a ſweetneſs in the preſence of Chriſt here, in that communion which he has with him in Heaven. By the taſte of *Joſhua*'s Grapes in the Wilderneſs, he judges what 'tis to ſit under the Vine in *Canaan*; *In thy preſence*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. 16. 11.

3*dly*, For *the great Advantages which Saints have in heaven to glorify God*. The great ambition of a godly man is not his own honour, but the glory of God. Now he finds that in this life he cannot praiſe him as he ſhould, nor exalt him as he would. Nay, he finds that God is very often a Sufferer in his Honour, by reaſon of his weakneſs, inconſtancy, and uneven walking; therefore he would fain be in that eſtate wherein he ſhall eternally glorify God, and never more diſhonour him. So here he joys in hope of the glory of God, (that is) not only of his being made glorious by the gift of God, but God being glorified by himſelf, in hope of glorifying God.

But ſome may object and ſay,

Object. *This deſire of death ſeems to be above the ordinary experience of Chriſtians.* There is rarely a man

man to be found among the beſt of Saints, that is not deſirous to abide in the world as bad as 'tis, rather than to go out of it, and that is not heartily afraid of death.

Anſw. 1. *I anſwer, Among ſincere Chriſtians many are weak, and of little growth.* Though a man have not attained ſuch a willingneſs to entertain death as ſome have, he may be ſincerely godly, and growing to it.

Anſw. 2. *You muſt take theſe conjunctly, A deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt.* So Chriſtians can ordinarily ſubſcribe and ſay, *I deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt.* Looking on the one as enough to ſweeten the other, and make it deſirable; elſe it were better for a Chriſtian to be with Chriſt as he is, than die and not be with him. This *Paul* intimates in the next words, *which is far better. As a dinner of herbs where love is,* Prov. 15. 17. *is better than a ſtalled ox with hatred. A Wilderneſs with Manna, is better than the Fleſh-pots in Egypt:* So to be gone out of this world, and be with Chriſt, is far better than to be in this world.

Anſw. 3. *The one part muſt be underſtood as abſolutely deſired, the other but relatively, to that in its relation to the other.* To be with Chriſt, a Chriſtian deſires abſolutely, he aims at it in all his faith and holineſs; but die he deſires not at all, ſave only as it ſerves to bring him to Chriſt; as Chriſt laid down his life to take it up, Joh. 10. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* So earneſt willingneſs, excludes not real unwillingneſs; as a man deſires to have his Leg or Arm cut off to preſerve his Body, yet is really unwilling to have the one or the other cut off.

4*thly*, The *beſt of Chriſtians are not always actually aſſured of this conjunction, and relation of death, and being with Chriſt, and then they cannot deſire death at all.* Death cannot be deſired, but as it's a paſſage to Jeſus Chriſt; take away that order which it has to a Chriſtian's being with Chriſt, and 'tis undeſirable; and a Chriſtian is not always ſure that when he dies, he ſhall be with Chriſt.

5*thly*, Though *a Chriſtian do heartily deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt, yet he cannot fix his deſire upon any particular point of time for them*, as to ſay, *Now I deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt.* For,

1. Chriſtians uſually deſire ſomewhat between them and death, which they apprehend conducing to their better dying, as *David* requeſts of the Lord, *Spare me a little, that I may recover my ſtrength before I go hence*; and, as *Moſes, Lord, let me go over* Jordan, *&c.* But now it's not the caſe of every Chriſtian that he can fix upon the time, and ſay as *Simeon, Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.* Every Chriſtian cannot ſay ſo, though he has *a deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt.*

2. *They muſt be determined by the Will of God, however for the time, and not by their own aſſignment*; as *Simeon, Now diſmiſſeſt thou thy ſervant in peace, Luke* 2. 29. So *Paul, I know not which to chuſe, Philip.* 1. 22. And ſo much for the proof of this Point, *That well-ſetled and eſtabliſhed Chriſtians do live in an earneſt deſire to leave this world, and be with Chriſt in Heaven.* I come now to the *Uſes.* And firſt:

1 Uſe. *By this we may judge of our Attainments in Chriſtianity.* If our hearts ſtick faſt to the world, and we have no mind to leave it. If our deſires

deſires after Heaven be looſe and cool, 'tis a ſign we have made little progreſs in Chriſtianity. If we be Chriſtians at all, natural motion is ſtronger toward the end; as a Stone falling to the earth, the nearer it comes to the ground, the ſwifter 'tis in motion. So the further we grow in Chriſtianity, the more heavenly-natur'd we grow, and ſo the more deſirous to be there; every thing tends to its natural place. The more we grow in Grace, the more ſight we have of the excellency of Heaven, and ſo are more willing to leave the world. Heaven is the Chriſtian's Centre, and the nearer he comes to it, the faſter he moves toward it. Time, and experience of the world, may make us leſs eſteem earthly things, but Grace only makes us willing to leave them, becauſe it only raiſes our deſires to Heaven; for till we know and hope for better, we are never content to leave what we have, though it be never ſo ſorry and undeſirable. Secondly:

Uſe 2. *This ſerves to humble us for our unwillingneſs to leave the world, and weak deſire to be with Chriſt.* 'Tis an evidence of our little proficiency, or improficiency under means of Grace, when 'tis little in our minds and unpleaſing; we hardly leave the world, and join with Chriſt a little while, a Sabbath, an hour; when it's grievous to us to part with any thing in the world for Chriſt, when we take little care to get and keep that communion with him which we might have in this world. Thirdly:

Uſe 3. *This ſerves to perſwade Chriſtians to ſet their affections on things above,* Coloſſ. 3. 1. That they may be looſe from theſe earthly things, and

live in a *deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt.* For,

1. *This will aſſure you of your attainment of your deſire.* Earneſt *deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt,* is a certain evidence that when you depart, you ſhall be with Chriſt in Heaven, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in 2 Tim. 4. 8. *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing*; (that is) his coming to receive them to himſelf, *&c.* that long to ſee the very firſt glimpſe that is to be had of him; as when a man looks for a Friend coming by Sea, he longs to ſee the top of the Sails of the Ship that brings him: ſo the Soul that loves the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt, if there be any ſign of his coming to receive them to himſelf, they rejoice to ſee the very tops of the Sails of that Ship that brings Jeſus Chriſt to them. The Lord will never fruſtrate ſuch a deſire; open thy mouth thus wide, and it ſhall be filled, if Heaven be enough to fill it.

2. *It will make all eaſy that is to be ſuffered by the way.* If once you attain to this, that you can deſire to die, and be with Chriſt, you will not ſtick at ſufferings on this ſide death; that being the King of Terrors, all other Fears are but its Subjects, and terrible only as they ſerve under its Banner to ſubdue men to it, and bring them under its power; as *Paul* argued, Acts 21. 13. *I am ready not only to be bound, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem, for the name of the Lord Jeſus.* If to die, no doubt to be bound.

ACTS

ACTS XX. 24.

That I may finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God.

THE *laſt and greateſt ſtep to, or into a Chriſtian's perfection, is the Soul's reſignation in death.* Death, as 'tis alike certain and inevitable to all men, ſo 'tis equally profitable and advantagious to all Believers. But it muſt be noted, it's eaſy and comfortable to ſome more, to others leſs, in a great variety; as *Job* ſaid concerning men, ſo we may ſay of Chriſtians, *One dies in his full ſtrength, another in the bitterneſs of his ſoul,* Job 21. 23. (that is) one dies mourning and dejected, another joyous and triumphant, which was *Paul*'s ambition in theſe words:

That I may finiſh my courſe with joy.

The Life of man is a Race, and ſo is his Work.

Firſt, *His Life is a Race.* Every man runs from the womb to the grave; a Stage far ſhorter to ſome indeed than 'tis to others, but it's a Race to all.

2dly, *His Work in his Life-time is a Race.* Man is a buſy Creature, and doth much Work, ſuch as it is, in a little time, and therefore his action in this World is not only called in Scripture his walk-

walking, as Job 9. 25. *My days are ſwifter than a poſt: they flee away, they ſee no good.* But it's called his running, and running his courſe, as in the Text; and in *Jer.* 8. 6. *Every man turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battel*; (that is) to his own way and actions. *John*'s work in the Miniſtry is called his courſe, *Acts* 13. 25. *As John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid*, &c. And ſo *Paul* ſpeaking of Chriſtian practice, tells the *Galatians*, *Ye did run well*, Gal. 5. 7. And thus the Apoſtle's own work was his courſe in which he proceeded with an extraordinary ſwiftneſs; *I laboured more abundantly than they all*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. But the courſe which he here ſpeaks of finiſhing, is that of his life, the other of his Miniſterial work being preſently ſubjoined, *And the miniſtry which I have received.* Both theſe Races had the ſame period in *Paul*'s intention at leaſt, and probably in performance (though not the ſame ſpeech); it was the Apoſtle's intention not to leave off the work of his Miniſtry during the term of his life; and his great deſire was, that when he ſhould finiſh the one, and ſo be taken off from the other, he might finiſh both with joy, the courſe of his life, and the courſe of his work; *That I may finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received.* Of the former, *I may finiſh*——

There is nothing wherein according to nature a man is more paſſive than his death, and yet even death it ſelf is ſometimes attributed to men as their own act. All men are active to their own death in ſinning, which is the meritorious and procuring cauſe of it; *the wages of ſin is death.* Godly men are active in their own death, in a willing reſignation of themſelves, and delivering up of their Souls into the hand of God, as 'tis ſaid of *Jacob*, Gen.

49. ult. *He yielded up the ſpirit:* So for a man to finiſh his courſe, is to die, and depart this life, which *Paul* earneſtly deſires to do with joy.

And hence we may obſerve,

Doctr. *That it is a Chriſtian's great concernment, that he may depart this life with ſpiritual joy and comfort; or while he lives, to conſult and provide for a comfortable dying.* Becauſe firſt,

Reaſ. 1. *A Chriſtian is ſubject to many Troubles in his life-time. In the world,* ſays St. *John, ye ſhall have tribulation,* John 16. It's a ſad thing, after a weariſom day, to lie down in ſorrow. *A ſervant,* ſays *Job, waits earneſtly for the ſhadow of the evening,* Job. 7. 2. (that is) of his going to his reſt after his days-work; whether you live regularly or looſely, if you ſtick to rule, men will be upon you; if you ſin, God will rebuke you. 2dly,

Reaſ. 2. *A Chriſtian has great need of ſpiritual joy to ſupport him againſt the ſorrows with which death is naturally accompanied.* Death is ſo ſorrowful a thing, that it would be too much miſery to a godly man to endure it, without ſpiritual comfort; and therefore as God in kindneſs to him, will not leave him altogether deſtitute of it in ſo needful a time, ſo he himſelf is highly concerned to make the beſt and moſt effectual proviſion for it. There are three ſorts of ſorrows of death, that make ſpiritual comfort highly needful to a dying Chriſtian.

Firſt, *The ſorrow of the parting between Soul and Body.* This is the moſt proper and immediate ſor-

row

row of death; the union between Soul and Body is ſuch as makes diviſion grievous to the perſon. Death of it ſelf is an enemy to Nature, and therefore it muſt needs be a very ſorrowful thing to come under its hands; even Chriſt himſelf, that had no ſin in him, was afraid of it, and prayed againſt it, *Hebr.* 5. 7. *When he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears unto him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared.* The Scripture ſets forth this by many ſignificant expreſſions, as *the pains of death*, Acts 2. 24 *Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death.* And again, *the terrors of death*, and *the king of terrors*, as Job 18. 14. *His confidence ſhall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it ſhall bring him to the king of terrors.* Again, it's called *the bitterneſs of death*, 1 Sam. 15. 32. *And Agag ſaid, Surely the bitterneſs of death is paſt.* And then it's called *the ſorrows of death*, as *David* ſays in Pſal. 18. 4. *The ſorrows of death compaſſed me.* Now ſeeing death is unavoidable, and has in it ſelf ſo much grievouſneſs, men have great need of comfort to make it eaſier and more tolerable.

Secondly, *The ſorrow of parting with preſent mercies and comforts that we have had the uſe of*, (if a man has not hopes of better) *this alſo is very grievous; though he gets better, yet 'tis hard to leave the comforts which we have been uſed to, and in which God has been kind to us.* It's ſaid of *Hezekiah*, that when the meſſage of death came to him, *he wept ſore*, 2 Kings 20. 3. though he knew his paſſage from hence was into a far better place; therefore God is uſually pleaſed to mortify men to the World by Age and Sickneſs, before Death comes, to make it eaſier parting with preſent comforts.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *The ſorrow of God's Rebukes and Reproofs for Sin. Death commonly brings Sin to remembrance, and awakens Conſcience to inveigh againſt the Soul for it.* So Conſcience will tell us at ſuch a time when Death's approaching, it will mind us of our Sins of Omiſſion, the undue expence of precious time, the loſs of opportunities for ſpiritual benefit. It will mind us of the careleſs uſe of the means of Grace. Sins of Commiſſion, in which a man has diſhonoured God, or been injurious to man. Theſe things uſually come to remembrance at ſuch a time, and Conſcience falls fiercely on the Soul for them; and this is plainly the Reproofs of the Almighty within a man, Conſcience being his Deputy and Remembrancer; yea, Death it ſelf is a Rebuke for Sin. God would never put us to the pains of Death, were it not that we have ſinned: As when God pardoned the ſin of *David*, yet he appointed him *the ſword to dwell in his houſe*, as a ſorrowful memorial of his ſin, 2 *Sam.* 12. 10. ſo he appoints all his people many afflictions in this life, though he forgives their ſin; and Death at laſt, as an unavoidable Rebuke for ſin: As if he ſhould ſay, I take away your ſin, and free you from the curſe of my Law; but yet not a man of you ſhall get to Heaven, but through the pains of death, through *the dark valley of the ſhadow of death.* Yea, many times Chriſtians have Reproofs given them in their Death, for ſome particular Sins which God gives them notice of; as *Moſes* and *Aaron* died in the Wilderneſs for a Reproof of their Unbelief: And many of the *Corinthians* were judged of God in their Death for their Sin about the Holy Supper, 1 *Cor.* 11. that is, as the Apoſtle there expounds it, *They were chaſtened of God, that they might*

might not be condemned. And this is a very ſorrowful thing to be ſmitten with Death in a Rebuke for Sin, as *Moſes* complains of it, *Deutr.* 4. 22. *The Lord ſware againſt me, that I ſhall not go into the land of Canaan.* Thus Death is ſo ſorrowful a thing, as would be too much for a Chriſtian to endure, without ſpiritual comfort to take off the bitterneſs of it.

Reaſ. 3. *It is highly due to the Honour of Chriſtianity, that a Chriſtian ſhould die comfortably in the exerciſe of ſpiritual joy.* Chriſtianity propounds life and glory to be enjoyed after Death, and teaches men to accept of Death as a paſſage to ſuch happineſs *as eye hath not ſeen,* &c. *Bleſſed are the dead dying in the Lord,* Rev. 14. 13. Now if they that hold up this Profeſſion among men, ſhould be as ſadly ſurprized with Death, and as much affrighted and appaled at it as other men, this would bring a ſhame upon their Profeſſion, and lay it open to the reproach of thoſe who will be ready to ſay, I thought you had been going home to your Father, to your beloved Jeſus Chriſt, to your bleſſed Inheritance, *&c.* and can you die ſorrowfully? Thus Chriſtians are exerciſed with great Afflictions, and no appearing help. Adverſaries are preſently ready to ask, Where now is your God? and there is no ſufficient Anſwer, but to acknowledge his comforting and ſupporting preſence; where is He? why, here he is in our hearts and ſouls, ſtrengthning and upholding us. So 'tis in the caſe of Death; no maintaining the credit of Religion againſt Reproach, but by rejoicing in the Lord when we are going out of the world; and therefore our great care ſhould be, that we may die in peace with God.

Reaſ.

Reaſ. 4. *It's a neceſſary part of a Chriſtian's love to thoſe whom he leaves behind him, to die chearfully.* A Chriſtian's chearful Death eaſes the ſorrow of ſurviving Friends; and we ſhould

1. *Endeavour ſo to go out of the world, as to leave them as little trouble as may be that ſtay behind us:* Eſpecially to provide what we can, that if they mourn, they may not *mourn as thoſe without hope* concerningus.

2. But beſides this, *A Chriſtian's chearful and comfortable dying, is an encouragement to others to follow him in the way of Chriſtianity. Balaam* himſelf deſired *to die the death of the righteous*; but where grace is, the death of the righteous will encourage a man to live the life of the righteous, conſidering, as the Apoſtle ſays, *the end of their converſation*, Hebr. 13. 7. Now for the Uſes.

Uſe 1. Hence we learn, *That the work and care of a Chriſtian is as laſting as his life.* When he is converted to God, and believes in Chriſt, he muſt take care to live well; and when he has walked with God, and demeaned himſelf like a Chriſtian in his converſation, he muſt have a care alſo to die well, that he may depart in peace, and in the joy of the Lord. They greatly miſtake, that think a Chriſtian once juſtified and adopted, has no more to do but ſtay the time when he ſhall go to Heaven. He muſt take heed how he lives. and have a care how he dies; ſo that living and dying, he has peculiar Duties to attend.

Uſe 2.

Uſe 2. It ſhews *the happineſs of a Chriſtian in his death.* He dies ſuch a death as will not only bear joy and comfort, but requires it. He has not only cauſe to rejoice when he goes out of this world, but ought to do it: *Bleſſed are the dead dying in the Lord,* Rev. 14. 13. Men of this world pleaſe themſelves in the preſent delights of their life, but that's a happy life indeed which tends to a pleaſurable and truly joyous end.

Uſe 3. The third Uſe teaches and exhorts Chriſtians, *to be always providing not only for a ſafe, but a comfortable death.* And to this end take theſe few Directions following.

Direct. 1. *Be diligent to aſſure your ſelves that you are reconciled to God in Jeſus Chriſt, and at peace with him.* The great terror of death is, that it brings men to the Bar of God's great judgment. But when we are once ſure of Pardon, we may ſafely expect a juſtifying Sentence, and an Adjudication to Glory. And there is no danger in appearing before that Judge by whom we ſhall certainly be acquitted, when a man can ſay, I am going to my God, my Father, my Redeemer, *&c.* This will make it comfortable dying, as our Saviour ſaid, *I go to my Father, and your Father.* This aſſurance made *Paul* triumph over death, as in Rom. 8. 38. *Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* And ſo in 1 Cor. 15. 55. *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

Direct. 2.

Direct. 2. *Be much in meditation of heaven, according to the report that Scripture gives of it*; that which is more and better than Eye has ſeen, or Ear heard; yea, a fulneſs of joy: Or, as as *Eliphaz* ſaid to *Job* of hearing, *Job* 5. 27. *Hear this, and know it for thy ſelf.* Think of theſe things for your ſelves— How happy ſhall I be if once I may behold the face of God in Righteouſneſs; be like him, and ſee him as he is. When the Prodigal thought what was in his Father's Houſe, it made him glad to return; and that's the Argument that our Saviour gives his Diſciples againſt trouble in this World, the conſideration of what is provided for them in his Father's Houſe: *John* 14. 2. *In my father's houſe are many manſions:* And in *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our converſation is in heaven, whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* We look at things not ſeen.

Direct. 3. *Be always labouring to diſcharge your ſelves of earthly hopes.* We are looking for ſome contentment in things of this World, and that makes Death more unacceptable. But you have no certainty of any Earthly comfort that you can propound to your ſelves; and be it what it will, there is better to your ſatisfaction to be had in Heaven. Remember what *Leah* and *Rachel* ſaid to *Jacob*, Is there *any portion or inheritance yet for us?* &c. *Gen.* 31. 14. That made them willing to go into *Canaan*: They had no expectation left in *Padan-Aram.*

Direct. 4. *Endeavour always to maintain uprightneſs and ſincerity of heart.* That's the comfort of Chriſtians while living and dying; that's comfort while we live, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience.* And when we dye, Pſal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the*

 upright;

upright; for the end of that man is peace. And ſo *Prov.* 14. 32. *The righteous has hope in his death.*

Direct. 5. *Diligently apply your ſelves to all duties of righteouſneſs and goodneſs toward men.* It conduces much to the comfort of our death, to live as, in the exerciſe of holineſs toward God, ſo in practice of honeſty and goodneſs to men. It helps to make a man wait with confidence for the coming of Chriſt: *Tit.* 2. 12, 13. *Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* See how *Paul* takes his dying leave of the *Epheſians*, though he was not preſently to die, *Acts* 20. 33. *I have coveted no man's ſilver, or gold, or apparel.* Sixthly and Laſtly:

Direct. 6. *Live in a continual exerciſe of faith in Jeſus Chriſt for remiſſion of ſin, and everlaſting life.* Be always truſting, and renewing your confidence in Chriſt: There is no preſerving our aſſurance of peace with God, no maintaining of our hope of glory, without continual recourſe had to the great Advocate, for the ſaving benefits of his Mediation. He can never dye comfortably, that doth not always live by faith: 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.* The continual exerciſe of judgment and holy diſcretion in our Actions, is a keeping of Judgment; *Pſal.* 106. 3. *Bleſſed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteouſneſs at all times:* So the continual exerciſe of Faith is a keeping of Faith; which confirms the Soul againſt the fear of Death and Judgment. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him*

him againſt that day. Thus now have I endeavoured to ſhew you what is neceſſary to a Chriſtian's comfortable paſſage through this World; and that's the laſt thing of a Chriſtian's motion towards his Perfection, To go well out of this World. And now this work of a Chriſtian's motion towards his Perfection, I ſhall conclude with this: *I have finiſhed my courſe.*

FINIS.